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**Exploring Criticality in Teaching English for  
Academic Purposes via Pedagogy for  
Autonomy, Practitioner Research and Arts-  
enriched Methods**

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## Declaration

I confirm that the thesis is my own work and has not been submitted for a degree at another university. I also declare that the material contained in the thesis has not been published elsewhere except for the following two publications which are based on either data that was intended to be used for this thesis but was not in the end, or issues arising in the process of conducting practitioner research as part of this study, both of which have been referenced in this study:

Salvi, A. I.; Wang, C.; Li, Y.; Lu, C.; Wu, Y.; Ye, S.; Zhao, Y.; Qiu, K.; and Cui, W. 2016. 'Involving EAP students in sharing their educative experience and development via arts-enriched methods'. *English Language Teacher Education and Development*, 19.

Salvi, A. I. 2015. 'Some issues in Practitioner Research'. In D. Bullock and R. Smith (Eds.) *Teachers Research!* UK: IATEFL Research SIG.

The following publications are based on an MA thesis I wrote prior to starting this doctoral study, all of which have been referenced in this thesis:

Salvi, A. I. 2017. 'Why don't we bring EP and learner autonomy together?' – a story of integration'. In J. Hanks, *Exploratory Practice in Language Teaching: Puzzling over Principles and Practices*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Hanks, J., Miller, I., Xavier Ewald, C., Mendes Lima Moura, S., Apolinário, C., Slimani-Rolls, A., Bond, B., Poole, J., Allwright, D., Dar, Y. & **Salvi, A. I.** 2016. "“Why Exploratory Practice?” A collaborative report', *ELT Research*, IATEFL Research SIG Newsletter, 31. Accessible [Online]: <http://resig.weebly.com/issue-31.html>

Allwright, D., Dar, Y., Gieve, S., Hanks, J., **Salvi, A. I.**, & Slimani-Rolls, A. 2013. 'Exploratory Practice: Using class time to help teachers and learners develop as practitioners of teaching and learning'. *ELT Research*, IATEFL Research SIG Newsletter, 28. Accessible [Online]: <http://resig.weebly.com/issue-28.html>

Salvi, A. I. 2012. Integrating a Pedagogy for Autonomy with Exploratory Practice. MA Dissertation, University of Warwick (Unpublished)

## **Abstract**

This is a practitioner-research study of the development of criticality in English for Academic Purposes (EAP) contexts, via pedagogy for autonomy, exploratory practice (EP), and arts-enriched research methods. The study begins with an exploration of criticality with respect to the literature on Critical English for Academic Purposes (CEAP), critical pedagogy, critical thinking, and critical theory. The context for the empirical research was three short programmes/modules on academic English, involving 56 students in total, at two HE institutions in the UK and a partner university in China, over a total period of seven months. The aim of the research was to identify signs of criticality in what we did; and whether and how pedagogy for autonomy, EP, and arts-enriched research methods were conducive to criticality development. Data collected included my own diary; students' reflective writing; reflective drawings/paintings; voice- and video-recorded group discussions and presentations; posters made in class; semi-structured interviews; and conversations. Themes emerging in each teaching phase/cycle are presented in three central chapters, followed by a cross-phase rearrangement which reveals three main overarching themes: being in charge; sociological and cultural awareness; and collaboration and others. These serve as the basis on which to identify signs of criticality and to discuss to what extent and how pedagogy for autonomy, EP and arts-informed research methods contributed to criticality development. The main signs of criticality included students' enquiries into their own epistemic doubts; dialogue for understanding and joint enquiry; and developing awareness of the constructed nature of knowledge and socio-cultural discourses and practices, and of struggles in the performance of difference. The study contributes to understanding of the nature of criticality and how to develop it in EAP contexts; and of aspects of pedagogy for autonomy, EP and arts-enriched methods. The study shows the value to EAP of a broader understanding of criticality with contributions from CEAP, critical pedagogy, critical thinking and critical theory. The value of pedagogy for autonomy, EP and arts-enriched research methods in the development of criticality is also highlighted, and practitioner-research is shown to contribute insights that can illuminate other practitioners and the field more broadly.

## **Abbreviations**

AR: Action Research

CEAP: Critical English for Academic Purposes

EAP: English for Academic Purposes

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

ELT: English Language Teaching

EP: Exploratory Practice

HE: Higher Education

PEPAS: Potentially Exploitable Pedagogic Activities

UG: Undergraduate

UK: United Kingdom

## Chapter One: Introduction

*The world is wilder than that in all directions, more dangerous and bitter, more extravagant and bright.* (Dillard, 1985: 268)

My motivation to study criticality in English for Academic Purposes (EAP) comes from a realisation both that understanding of criticality within EAP seems narrow and elusive at times, and that a Pedagogy for Autonomy (Holec, 1981; Dam, 1995), Exploratory Practice (EP) (Allwright, 2003; Allwright and Hanks, 2009), both of which had been informing my teaching practice for the last few years, and Arts-enriched Research Methods (Knowles and Cole, 2008) seem to promote at least some aspects of criticality in a broad sense. At the same time, at the start of this study, I was puzzled by whether these three approaches were really the most appropriate to promote development of student criticality. In order to explore this, I decided to investigate what criticality means within the literature on Critical EAP (CEAP), Critical Pedagogy, Critical Thinking in education, and Critical Theory, and, while teaching EAP, I attempted to promote criticality as I understood it at the time via deploying a Pedagogy for Autonomy informed by the principles of Exploratory Practice, and Arts-enriched Research Methods. I believe that by the end of the practitioner research process reported here and after analysing the data for emerging themes and in turn juxtaposing them with meanings of criticality in the literature, a more holistic and exemplified understanding of criticality development in EAP has been gained in this study. Ultimately, I hope that a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of criticality, which is one of the goals of the Western university, can contribute to developing a more educational approach to EAP.

This study is a cyclical exploration of criticality and of its manifestation in the course of teaching three consecutive academic English language programmes/modules in two Higher Education (HE) institutions in the UK and a partner university of one of them in China, in the course of seven months. The contexts include (1) an intensive short pre-session course in China in May-June 2014 (institution 1); (2) an intensive short course in EAP, teaching methodology and teacher development in July-August 2014 (institution 2); and (3) an optional second-

year undergraduate module in academic essay writing in Sep-Dec 2014 (institution 1).

This exploration does not limit itself to the classroom, though its main site is the classroom; for example, it includes my own voice-recorded or written reflections, a discussion outside of the classroom with a colleague, emails with the students, their work in progress via posters, video-recorded classroom sessions, their reflective drawings of their learning experience and their talk about their drawings. The different cycles showcase my understanding of how I developed criticality in each case. The first programme occurred in China where I wished to understand how to be critical in a cultural context where dissent is said to be avoided; in the second programme for Chinese visiting student teachers in the UK (United Kingdom), I suggested that participants could explore topics such as the neoliberal university, teacher research, democracy, and learner autonomy, which are related to participation and inclusion in society, and which would spark debate and the opportunity to challenge the way things are both in the UK and in their context. In the third language module, I attempted to encourage participants to reflect on their learning in writing; to participate in ‘making meaning’ of the syllabus content in collaboration with their peers (Chun, 2015); and to develop their own voice in writing.

## **1.1 Starting point**

My interest in exploring what is meant by being critical in the EAP classroom context was born from my previous EAP teaching practice which had been informed by both a Pedagogy for Autonomy (Holec, 1981; Dam, 1995) and Exploratory Practice (Allwright, 2001, 2003; Allwright and Hanks, 2009) for the three years prior to starting this project. During this time and as part of a master's dissertation (Salvi, 2012; see also Salvi, 2017) I explored the synergies between the two aforementioned approaches in an EAP context via practitioner research as both seemed to have similar features such as bringing students centre stage in the educative enterprise by involving them in making decisions about their learning, that is, about what to learn, how long to invest in that learning, and so on, as well as involving them in working together and in reflecting about and evaluating their learning process. This (Salvi, 2012) study revealed that while both approaches promoted teacher and learner autonomy, cooperative work, reflexivity (Mann, 2016) and self-awareness, among others, Exploratory Practice seemed broader in scope by claiming to be a framework for teaching, learning and researching, guided by seven principles: 1. Focus on quality of life as the main issue; 2. Work for understanding, before thinking about solving problems; 3. Involve everybody as practitioners developing their own understanding; 4. Work to bring people together in a common enterprise; 5. Work cooperatively for mutual development; 6. Make it a continuous enterprise; 7. Minimise the burden by integrating the work for understanding into normal pedagogic practice (Allwright & Hanks, 2009: 260). Its scope seems broader than that of a Pedagogy for Autonomy because it is not only a framework for teaching and learning but also for researching, and because it adds more specificities, that is, while promoting autonomy (decision-making, self-awareness, reflexivity and cooperation), it emphasises what to work on, that is, quality of life, and that its purpose is understanding rather than problem-solving. Promoting autonomy is a constitutive element of EP rather than its purpose.

By the end of this MA dissertation practitioner research project and before starting the current doctoral study, I was puzzled by students' 'knowing' (Wu, 2002; 2005), in other words, the nature of the knowledge gained from their own enquiries; whether that knowledge constituted 'common-sense' or 'critical knowledge' or whether it was something in between (Freire, 2011); and whether allowing space for

as many individual enquiries as there were students in the classroom was worth it, given that the lecturer most probably cannot check whether the information gathered by the participants has been understood. In other words, my puzzle was whether students develop critical knowledge by ‘exploring their own puzzles’ (Allwright and Hanks, 2009; Hanks, 2017a), ‘pursuing the necessity of their own doubts as the substance of their own degree’ (Tubbs, 2004: xiv), and ‘investigating their own epistemic doubts’ (Brown, 1998).

The two approaches seemed very much aligned with what I understood to be a critical education, that is, an education that prioritises what learners already know and their own doubts and questions, that allows learners to ask and explore their own questions, to question the status quo, to learn from each other, and to respect each other. My assumption was that a critical education was related to: questioning and discussing issues related to politics and society; participation and democracy; equality; thinking about the role of education - in the case of the participants in this study, the role of university or higher education; expressing insights and understandings, no matter how partial they might be, and if possible, formalising them somehow, either via art such as painting or drawing, or via written reflections, or schematically in a poster; having options and making decisions; becoming aware of alternatives and different perspectives, which in turn relates to having hope; learning about oneself and other people; collaboration and cooperation; developing understanding about one’s own epistemic doubts; and having and dealing with information. Most of these characteristics that I associated at the outset of this study with a critical education already seemed to be there in my practice informed by a Pedagogy for Autonomy and Exploratory Practice. Therefore, I decided to explore what is meant by criticality from different currents of thought, and at the same time, to put more emphasis in my teaching practice on those aspects of it that I was reading about as I continued teaching each of the three successive EAP short programmes/modules in the course of seven months from the start of this doctoral study.

Thus, I explored the literature on Critical EAP, Critical Pedagogy, Critical Thinking and Critical Theory at the same time as I carried out the research I report on in this thesis. Regarding Critical Theory, I focused on the construction of the subject and the concept of critique. At the same time, since I was teaching academic English, I

wanted to continue with practitioner research, that is, I wanted to gain deeper understandings from my own teaching practice and my students' own learning practices. I planned to keep a record of the students' reflections and insights into the educative experience. My assumption was that being reflective is closely related to being critical; at the same time, by exploring the content of their reflections I aimed to find hints that indicate the nature and kind of the knowledge developed/gained via their own investigations throughout the programme. I also expected to find evidence of criticality. I wished to find out what specific critical aspects there were in my teaching practice; in what ways my practice constituted a critical education or not; what critical aspects were the most prominent in my practice and why; and whether there are critical aspects that still need to be further developed and how this could be done. At the same time, I intended to develop an understanding of how my reading and reflecting on specific aspects of criticality at the time I was teaching influenced my practice.

At the outset of this study, I was particularly interested in exploring the potential of Arts-enriched Research Methods (HEA, 2014). Within Pedagogy for Autonomy and Exploratory Practice, posters, including text and drawings, are commonly used for sharing understanding and posing further questions (Allwright and Hanks, 2009), for planning a scheme of work, and what needs to be done next, and for showing insights gained after investigating a topic (Dam, 1995). Wu (2002; 2005) lists some of the functions that posters can play in the classroom and suggests, as Hanks (2013) does, that further research on students' posters needs to be done. I became curious about using students' posters in connection with 'criticality' (Johnston et al., 2011); in other words, posters seemed to serve as tools that helped 'students make meaning' (Chun, 2015), reflect about what they had done, and discuss and share views and insights with others, all of which seemed to resonate with criticality. Perhaps students' posters could be regarded as plans for essays or even synonymous with essays if they are created as products. In this sense studying students' visual production could be illuminating in the study of student criticality.

Having said this, for this study, I did not wish to focus entirely on students' posters but rather ask students to do drawings to reflect on their experience. One of the reasons for not analysing students' posters as the main visual data source was that while acknowledging the advantages of using this tool, I was also questioning using

it so often. Sometimes this task would become repetitive if carried out consistently. What to do with the posters after using them, as well as whether to use the posters as the basis for another level of formalisation such as writing an essay, a report or a reflective entry were issues I was thinking of at the time. Motivated by the seventh EP principle that suggests minimising the research burden by using normal pedagogic practices as tools for data collection (Allwright and Hanks, 2009), I wanted to focus more on teaching and learning than on researching. I felt it was not fair on the students to prioritise research over teaching and learning, and I thought that deciding on collecting posters *a priori* would be an imposition or a constraint on teaching and learning. Therefore, I decided that I would collect posters only when the opportunity arose naturally according to the affordances of each provision, that is, whether there was time, if it was welcomed by the students, and if it had not been overused.

The fact that I was already using posters in my own practice was one of my motivations for being attracted to using forms of art as data. Another motivator was a perceived connection between art and criticality. I thought that by introducing art – students’ reflections on learning via painting and drawing – into academic language learning programmes, I would be promoting creativity, imagination and criticality. Introducing something alien to the normal practice, in other words, disrupting the normal course of teaching, learning and researching, seemed to be a way of promoting a critical practice (Grey, 2009). Another motivator for exploring arts-enriched research methods was a perception that through art participants might be able to express different thoughts and insights from those expressed verbally via interviews or in writing. All in all, these were the motivators for my decision to explore and implement arts-enriched research methods in the current study. More specifically, I decided to ask students to reflect on their learning via painting and drawing once a week or once in the course according to the relevant affordances. In most cases students were asked to talk about their artworks afterwards.

The next chapter, Chapter 2, presents a review of meanings of the word ‘critical’ and ‘criticality development’ in HE, before criticality is explored in the light of the following currents of thought: Critical EAP, Critical Pedagogy, Critical Thinking, and Critical Theory. Chapter 3 presents the research questions and context of this study; reviews the main three pedagogical and research frameworks that inform this

study, namely, pedagogy for autonomy, exploratory practice and arts-enriched research methods, and the concept of live methods; and explains the data collection and analysis processes. Chapters 4, 5 and 6 present a description and a ‘conventional content analysis’ of the three EAP teaching experiences that are integral to this study, respectively. Chapter 7 is divided in two main sections, the first one responds to the first research question, and the second one to the second research question. Lastly, Chapter 8 presents a summary of the whole study and its main contributions.

## **Chapter Two: Literature Review**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter reviews studies of the word ‘critical’ and concepts of ‘criticality development’ in higher education, as well as of criticality according to the following currents of thought: Critical EAP, Critical Pedagogy; Critical Thinking; and Critical Theory.

### **2.2 Meanings of ‘critical’ and ‘criticality development’ in Higher Education**

Below the studies of Moore (2014) and Johnston et al. (2011) will be particularly highlighted. While the former is an exploration into meanings of the word ‘critical’, the latter focuses on student criticality development, both in higher education.

#### **2.2.1 Polysemy of the word ‘critical’ and its implication for teaching in HE**

Moore (2014) conducted research by interviewing 20 colleagues working in different disciplines at a university in Australia. He wanted to know how the term ‘critical’ was understood and used in tasks by his colleagues in their respective disciplines. From his data, he identified 7 meanings of this term: (1) a type of evaluative thinking; (2) a withholding of judgment; (3) to always be seeking to build upon knowledge, and to seek to make some “modest contribution” to it; (4) as a method, for example, as a form of rationality; (5) an empathetic – or ‘hermeneutic’ – understanding of things; (6) being critical necessarily had an ethical, even an activist quality about it; (7) as a type of “reflexive thinking”, to seek awareness of the ‘perceptual and conceptual frames’ that we bring to our apprehensions of the world. His findings also suggest that the term ‘critical’ is used to mean different things when used in tasks in each of the disciplines he examined in this study, namely, philosophy, history and cultural studies. Drawing on the idea of ‘semantic indeterminacy’ by Ludwig Wittgenstein (1958a, 1958b, 1961) and Raymond Williams (1976), Moore concludes that the term ‘critical’ like many other highly

frequently used terms in academia has different but interrelated meanings. Instead of trying to reduce its meanings to one overarching meaning, it would be best to recognise its nuances:

Williams suggests we need to see these imprecisions and uncertainties as matters of “contemporary substance”, and as “variations” to be insisted upon. Such a view is aligned with Wittgenstein’s rejection of what he called “the craving for generality” – that tendency, he suggested, to “look for something in common in all the entities we commonly subsume under a general term” (Moore, 2014: A98).

Challenging this polysemic understanding of terms, there are two practices in academia which seek to develop a generic understanding of terms and processes: the courses on generic skills whose underlying rationale is that there are general thinking skills that can be learned and thus transferred to specific areas of study, and skills taxonomies, which also seek to create a common language in the university. In contrast, Moore’s study embraces a polysemic understanding of terms. This has implications for teaching academics who could ‘shape their pedagogies to deal with these kinds of uncertainties’ (ibid.: A104) as well as raise and discuss these issues, that is, what this as well as other terms mean in their immediate context and/or in different contexts, with their students.

Examining the seven meanings of the critical that Moore (2014) has identified in his interviews conducted among colleagues, one can match some of them with the conceptualisation that will be examined further on in this literature review. More specifically, most of them seem to be related to what McPeck (1981) calls an inclination or attitude to be critical but none of them indicate McPeck’s precondition of having expert knowledge of the object of enquiry. For example, regarding the first meaning identified by Moore – ‘(1) *a type of evaluative thinking*’ – McPeck would argue that one cannot evaluate an activity or situation unless one has knowledge of its foundations. Moore’s sixth meaning – ‘(6) *being critical necessarily had an ethical, even an activist quality about it*’ – resonates particularly with Freire’s (2011, 1994) conceptualisation of criticality as an obligation of the educative enterprise, that is, as a commitment to reflect and thereafter act upon one’s own practice. Freire argues that educating implies critical reflection on one’s own practice. He says that by reflecting on one’s own practice, our ingenuous curiosity will little by little

evolve into critical curiosity. A critical teaching practice, he says, constitutes a dynamic and dialectic movement between thinking about doing and doing it, or in other words, between reflecting on one's practice and practising (Freire, 2011: 39-41). Like Moore, as reflected in the sixth meaning in his study, Freire (ibid.) linked criticality not only with ethics but also with activism. Specifically, Freire argues that one should be critical of the neoliberal discourse that prioritises market values over human values. In this sense, criticality has a socio-political meaning, which certainly has an activist connotation. The word 'activist' in Moore's sixth meaning does not necessarily imply having a political agenda. It seems to denote involvement, engagement, commitment, responsibility, and obligation to be critical in the academic context, without specifying what one should be critical of. In other words, while Moore is specifically presenting the various meanings associated with the word critical in higher education, Freire argues that the act of educating demands criticality and what he means by it is performing a 'methodical suspicion' of what is stated as the only truth, as in the case of cultural stereotypes or the neoliberal discourse with its slogan of market values; and consistently reflecting on one's practice. On top of discussing the educators' responsibilities and obligations, Freire also discourses upon the learners' responsibilities and obligations; however, when he confers specifically on criticality this seems to apply to both, educators and learners.

Even though each of the seven meanings of critical thinking identified by Moore could be compared with the literature in depth, I have limited this account to showing the most significant links between these and the literature. So far relations have been made to McPeck's conceptualisation of critical thinking in education and Freire's conceptualisation of criticality in the context of critical pedagogy.

Now I will try to make explicit how some of Moore's meanings seem to resonate closely with Exploratory Practice (EP). Even though one could explore the relationship between each meaning in Moore with EP in more depth, there are two meanings that immediately can be seen to resonate with EP which are '(3) *to always be seeking to build upon knowledge, and to seek to make some "modest contribution" to it*'; and '(5) *an empathetic – or "hermeneutic" – understanding of things*'. Regarding the first one – meaning (3), EP, like Critical EAP, aims at engaging students' curiosity; they are encouraged to share their puzzles and what they know and do not know about them and together to try to seek understanding.

The sources of information can be the students themselves, other people, and the literature, if they have access to books, a library, or the Internet for example. In order to share the work they have done, they are encouraged to use posters both as products and means of expressing work in progress. This ‘sharing’ stage is a synthesis; the work presented is a crystallisation of the work done. Discoursing on Merleau-Ponty’s critique of reason, Langan (1966) argues that these formalisations of thought, though always partial and incomplete, are invaluable, as they constitute individuals’ legacy. These formalisations could be considered ‘modest contributions to knowledge’ (Moore, 2014). Perhaps even more so if these have been created in such a way that others can access them in time. For example, if pictures of posters have been taken and posted on a website; if a presentation has been video-recorded and shared; or if formalisations of thought are published in a book or journal (Salvi, 2015; Salvi et al., 2016). However, EP does not claim ‘to seek to contribute to the body of knowledge’ but it could be argued that by sharing what they already know about a subject matter of their interest, by exploring what is already known about it in the literature, and by synthesizing the old and new information in order to share it with others, students are making a ‘modest contribution to knowledge’ if they are critical about what they know, what is known and what they synthesise.

Moore’s results suggest that the term ‘critical’ is associated with ‘seeking to build upon knowledge’. Building on knowledge requires that one be familiar with existent knowledge of the object of enquiry and create new knowledge using the existent one and adding new insights or interpretations to it. In order to do this, one needs to make meaning (Chun, 2015) of the existent knowledge in new ways. This is very much what EP aims at, that is, providing opportunities for learners and teachers to make meaning in their own ways, which constitutes in Chun’s terms being critical. If ‘making meaning’ is synonymous with ‘contributing to knowledge’, EP, which explicitly encourages learners to make meaning of their puzzles, might implicitly encourage learners to seek to contribute to knowledge, and therefore promoting criticality (Moore, 2015). ‘Contributing to knowledge’ and ‘making meaning’ both seem to have a tangible aspect to it, that is, both seem to denote a product such as an article, a play, or a piece of music, that can be accessed by others. All in all, Moore’s third meaning of criticality, which is ‘to seek to build on knowledge; to seek to make a modest contribution to knowledge’ seems to be present in EP, though implicit. EP

emphasises ‘understanding’, ‘working together’ and ‘continuity’ all of which are closely linked with meanings of criticality. Finally, Moore’s fifth meaning of criticality, ‘(5) *an empathetic – or ‘hermeneutic’ – understanding of things*’ resonates with EP as well as with McPeck’s and Freire’s emphasis on the attitudinal aspect of criticality, as they all seem to emphasise *how* understanding is pursued, *the way* this is done, that is reflectively, sceptically, and methodically. EP states that this should be done respectfully, jointly, trustworthily and sustainably, but does not seem to be explicit about being reflective and sceptical of assumptions and generalisations. Nonetheless, it is clear that the latter qualities are expected or implied within it. To conclude, it is evident that even though criticality has not been theoretically closely developed within EP, it is a central taken for granted element within it.

### **2.2.2 Third-party research on student development of criticality in HE in the UK**

Johnston et al. (2011) did a two-year theoretical and empirical study of student development of criticality in two programs - the first one, modern languages and the second one social work - in higher education in the UK. They argue that the meanings of criticality vary according to understandings of the goals that are adopted for higher education. They question whether the development of criticality should be an imperative in all cultures and demystify the common belief that criticality is a Western construct. Given the heterogeneous population of students in higher education nowadays, they wonder whether there are ‘ways forward that build on hybrid traditions and develop new types of criticality practice’ (ibid: 8). The data for this study consists of documents, observations, students’ writing, interviews to students and lecturers during classes at home and in their third year abroad. The data was analysed by looking for signs of student criticality development by moving back and forth between theory and empirical data, trying neither to impose theory onto practice solely nor to develop new theoretical insights from the empirical data solely. Based on the existing literature and on their empirical data the authors devised a framework for student criticality development. However, at the same time they used a provisional framework to analyse their primary data. In other words, the stages of exploring the literature, analysing their empirical data and designing a framework influenced each other and worked simultaneously. To conclude they argue that their

contribution is to draw together different strands in the literature in a novel way; that their focusing on the contextualised nature of criticality and the resources necessary for criticality is unusual; and that grounding their framework in longitudinal empirical naturalistic data is also a valuable contribution (ibid: 68).

## **2.3 Criticality in English for Academic Purposes**

Within the field of EAP it is common to hear people talk about critical thinking as a key skill to be developed. At least in the UK, it is less common to hear references to critical EAP, which has been more influential in the USA with the seminal work of Benesch (2001) and more recently with the work of Chun (2015) for example. Below is a review of what is conceived of as criticality within Critical EAP.

There are two main journals dedicated to academic language: one is the *Journal of English for Academic Purposes* and the other one is the *Journal of Academic Language and Learning*. Both of them contain articles supporting critical approaches to EAP. Most of these are from Australia, the US and Canada, but hardly any from the UK. In Britain, BALEAP, the British Association of Lecturers in English for Academic Purposes, supports professionals in EAP by organising conferences, workshops, and so on. Research on EAP in the UK has mainly been on academic genre analysis and spoken and written discourse (For examples, see the works of Gardner & Nesi, 2013; and Nesi & Gardner, 2012). At the 2015 BALEAP conference there were two presentations on criticality by practitioners: one on teaching and assessing critical thinking in essay writing and another one by Riley-Jones on a broader conceptualisation of criticality in EAP with Fine Arts students. The first paper reflected a narrower understanding of critical thinking; whereas the latter was more in line with my own study for it expands the meaning of criticality from critical thinking as a transferable skill to the areas of critical pedagogy and post-structuralist theory (Riley-Jones, 2014; 2012).

### **2.3.1 Critical English for Academic Purposes**

Within Critical English for Academic Purposes, the work of Benesch (2001, 2009) and the work of others who continue developing her framework such as Chun (2015)

and Grey (2009) will be particularly developed in this section. While Benesch and Chun have drawn on Critical Pedagogy substantially in framing and developing CEAP in the US, Grey has drawn on Critical Theory to a greater extent in her research, which she framed within CEAP in the Australian context. In the British context, Macallister (2016) has recently written a chapter on critical perspectives in EAP within *The Routledge Handbook of English for Academic Purposes* (Hyland & Shaw, 2016) in which he mentions these two currents of thought that have influenced and shaped CEAP, namely, Critical Pedagogy whose most influential theoretician is Paulo Freire, and Critical Theory whose most influential theoreticians are Horkheimer, Adorno, and Habermas. Thus when discussing CEAP, links with critical pedagogy and critical theory will inevitably be made.

Below, studies on CEAP have been explored and organised in three categories according to the kind of research they constitute: practitioner research, studies based on official documents, and research about practitioner research. The reason for this structuring is to show the kinds of studies that have been conducted on CEAP and to place the current practitioner-research project in relation to them.

### 2.3.1.1 Practitioner research in CEAP

There is a canonical piece of work in Critical English for Academic Purposes which is Benesch's (2001) *Critical English for Academic Purposes: Theory, Politics, and Practice*. Her work is contextualised in the United States. In it Benesch does not speak of critical thinking in particular but of critical English for Academic Purposes. One of the main issues within EAP has been whether it is better to teach general academic English or subject-specific academic English. Before introducing her study supporting the subject-specific approach, Benesch (2001) presents a summary of some of the main differences between the two approaches together with some of the main proponents of each. She argues for linked courses where both content subject teachers and EAP teachers work together to provide students with further opportunities to explore, debate and think about subject issues more deeply. Besides, this would do justice to the field of EAP, which is usually perceived as a subsidiary service. This way, teachers at both sides can learn from each other and help students better. From the aforementioned argument the critical can be interpreted as giving

students opportunities to talk about content-related issues in depth, to help them connect subject content with their own lives, and to develop their own understandings. She gives an example of a Psychology linked course she has taught. Noticing that her students were being lectured into different topics in their course but were given hardly any opportunities to discuss and develop their own understanding of them, she chose one of them, anorexia, and provided students with a written account of an anorexic young person as an extra source to trigger discussion. Besides, noticing that the Psychology syllabus did not include any female author, she tried to make up for it by providing students with feminist literature on this topic. She argues that criticality relates more with ‘how’ students and teachers deal with content, than with ‘what’ is taught or ‘who’ chooses the content. This, she claims, is aligned with Freire’s critical pedagogy, which highlights the importance of dialogue, cooperation, in other words, developing a sense of community where everyone helps each other learn and understand the subject in question in their own ways, and in relation to their own lives. This also resonates with the kind of learning, teaching and researching that Allwright (2003) advocates, Exploratory Practice, which I will address later on in Chapter Three. Benesch’s emphasis on the importance of how teachers and students approach content more than on what to teach or who chooses what to teach comes as a response to criticism that critical EAP should be concerned with students deciding on the topics they would like to explore more deeply. She claims that critical EAP should welcome both student- and teacher-selected content. Her having decided on anorexia as content to discuss in class has been critiqued by some scholars as imposing the teacher’s own agenda on the students. Benesch (2001) argues that teaching is a political act and that deciding on what to include in the curriculum is always a political act done by people with an agenda in mind. Making students aware of this though is constitutive of critical EAP, that is, that roles, content, space, what appears as given and immutable, is actually fluidly constructed and reconstructed. In sum, by advocating linked courses she argues for (1) collaboration between EAP and content teachers, for (2) providing more opportunities for students to be involved in making their own meaning, to explore content in personal ways, and for (3) expanding the subject content with literature that has been left aside so that students are presented with different world views on the subject content and can be more critical and better informed to develop their own understanding of it.

Besides adhering to Freire's critical pedagogy as has been showed above, Benesch refers to Foucault's (1977, 1980, 1988) work on power consistently in her work on CEAP. It is argued that in CEAP the mechanisms of power in an institution, between students and teachers, in relation to who decides what content to include in the curriculum, and so on, are intended to be made visible. Critical approaches to EAP challenge and question all things that are presented as immovable facts and truths. If students are aware of these mechanisms there is hope for them that there are alternatives to what is given, that knowledge is constructed rather than an unattainable object that is transmitted, and that power is also constructed or negotiated. Being aware of this empowers students and teachers to challenge ideas, theories and practices that neglect the well-being and rights of all the actors involved in the educative endeavour. In the Psychology-EAP linked course mentioned above this is exemplified by the inclusion of feminist literature which was not part of the content subject syllabus and by providing students with opportunities to engage themselves with their own experiences and knowledge of the subject matter, which were scarce in the content subject sessions.

In 2009 a special issue on critical EAP was published in the *Journal of EAP*, with an introduction by Benesch. In it, she introduces the three key questions, namely, (1) how the critical might be theorized in EAP contexts in today's globalizing world, (2) in what ways CEAP is currently being practiced, and (3) what CEAP contributes to EAP, from the perspectives of theory, research, and pedagogy, and she identifies commonalities among the contributors' understanding of the relationship between criticality and EAP. All of them (a) understand language as discourse; (b) the relationship between theory and practice is a central concern; (c) reflexivity is a key concern; (d) praxis is situated in the lives of those involved in the educative experience; (e) the limits of knowledge are acknowledged.

In the introductory article of the special issue, Benesch (2009) makes the point that teaching critical EAP is not about presenting students with problems and sad realities but rather to create hope, opportunities for students to develop, construct, and be; to provide them with the tools to exercise 'being' and to address daily situations they might not know how to deal with; to engage them in examining social roles, difference, and what is nonsensical and disruptive. Appleby in Benesch (*ibid.*) suggests designing lessons to generate 'greater awareness of the struggle over

multiple differences'. Benesch argues that this pedagogy might allow students to 'celebrate their suppressed identities' (Canagarajah, 2004:121).

In the same JEAP issue, Grey (2009) explores difference in an EAP course. She is both the tutor and the researcher. She introduces images in the classroom to generate opportunities for students to perform difference, that is, to be confronted with difference, to question paradigms, to develop their selves in dialogue with their peers. When reporting this research she uses critical moments in the experience as examples. One of the images she uses is of a hybrid human face. She refers to her students as nomadic ethnographers, exploring questions connected to diversity. The context is an EAP business module. Noticing that a key component of this module was diversity, she decided that using images to investigate diversity in relation to gender, sex, race, etc. would be important both for life and business. By performing a disruptive practice, students perform difference. She admits that students might not have learned how to write an essay or a report in the conventional way, but that they have been allowed to develop their identities.

In the UK context, Riley-Jones (2012, 2014) enquires about criticality in EAP with art students. He argues that it is important to raise critical awareness in the classroom and highlights the transformative power of engaging in critical practices, in that it makes us see the world differently. In a podcast after a BALEAP presentation (2014), he reports, as an EAP practitioner, working with students who will start art-related MA programmes. The focus of the EAP course he teaches is on developing his students' speaking skills to describe images. By introducing them to cultural theory, he aims to raise their critical awareness, which he argues will prove useful to them in their future programmes. Citing Benesch (1993: 42) and Pennycook (1997: 263), he argues that the field of EAP historically has been characterised by its ideology-free stand and suggests that it is necessary to bring ideology to the field, that is, to make students aware of different world views and how these influence the way we are and know about the world. Citing Barnett (2000:154), Riley-Jones argues that criticality should 'create epistemological and ontological disturbance in the minds and in the being of students'; in other words, criticality 'involves a reformation of the student's subject position including their sense of identity' (Riley-Jones, 2012: 401). This understanding of criticality is in line with those which are concerned with becoming aware of the nature of knowledge production and the

development of one's own subject position, or those which as Riley-Jones points out (2014) derive from the areas of critical pedagogy and post-structural theory. In his article (2012) he makes the point that by discussing some of the literature on cultural theory in class and in the process of talking about their final art work, the students who participated in the short-scale project he is reporting on show signs of developing criticality: that is, a sense of self, becoming and knowing.

This resonates with pedagogies that take account of the self, the other and life as important educative aims. Some examples are Exploratory Practice (Allwright and Hanks, 2009); Tubb's (2004) emphasis on the inherent relationship between philosophy and education, that is to say, on the relationship between learning, epistemic enquiry, and knowing oneself and the other; and Brown's (1998) radical view of education as opportunities to enquire one's own epistemic needs.

#### 2.3.1.2 Examining CEAP via official documents

Fenton-Smith (2014) examines Benesch's work on Critical EAP and its place in the current context of Australian Higher Education. While acknowledging its contribution, he recognises that CEAP has not had a widely spread effect and thus argues there is a need for more examples of it. He points out that examples of good CEAP practice are hardly ever found in publications, thus he examines current national and institutional documents in order to find out whether CEAP has any place in them. He mainly identifies and discusses key issues in Benesch's work. One of them is regarding who chooses the topics to be included in the syllabus, that is whether students' ideas are really taken on board regardless of what these are; another issue is to what extent should teachers impose their own values onto students. This article concludes that examples of CEAP in the Australian context are concerned with teachers and students' questioning the foundations of EAP, of teaching and learning at university, and of the syllabus, and with raising awareness of the constructive nature of reality.

McDougall et al. (2012) conducted a study of the curriculum of an Academic Language module which is part of a preparatory university programme in Australia in order to explore the place a pedagogy of hope, as understood by Giroux (1997) can have in such a context. Excerpts from online discussions illustrate the pedagogy

of hope that was developed in this module whose main feature is its support of critical thinking. By encouraging critical thinking, this kind of pedagogy aims at enabling students to develop both personally and academically. Students are encouraged to be aware (1) of the constructivist nature of their beliefs and of the socio-political order, and (2) that there is hope that they can create their own future and reality. Two tools are created to realise these two objectives. The first tool, 'circles of concern', is aimed at ensuring that students have opportunities to explore their own worldviews, other people's worldviews and to change worldviews (STEPS Teaching Staff, 2011); the second tool, 'Hero's Journey', is aimed at engaging students in reflecting on their own learning (Vogler, 1998). For these authors, being critical is the capacity to self-reflect by examining the foundations of our beliefs and ways of being and acting; and to reflect about the way the social and the political are constructed. This capacity generates hope that individuals can construct their own reality. This article stresses the importance of both the individual and the collective and the role dialogue plays in exercising criticality to construct knowledge, different worldviews and one's own reality. This article puts forward the view that 'social transformation begins with the individual' (McDougall et al.:A-62).

#### 2.3.1.3 Researchers supporting teachers in CEAP

Chun (2015) worked with an EAP teacher for three terms observing her lessons, chatting with her about materials and pedagogy and, as a result, they developed a deep rapport. One aspect of this research that resonates with my doctoral study is an interest in thinking of the EAP classroom as a site to facilitate a more active and productive engagement with 'the everyday', that is, with the social, political, and cultural aspects of everyday life.

An aspect I would like to explore in Chun (ibid.) is whether the personal as meant in Heidegger (Steiner, 1978) or in Exploratory Practice (Allwright and Hanks, 2009) is addressed. In my own work I aim to create an EAP classroom where there is space for everyone to engage not only with the social, political and cultural aspects of the everyday life via reading material to develop our own individual and mutual understanding of it, but also with our own learning lives (ibid.) or with who we are and/or we would like to be, with our own 'being' (Steiner, 1978). In this sense the

EAP class should be a space to think and question the world we live in and in turn to think and question who we are. Thinking about who we are and/ or who we aspire to be may be a practice that not everyone may be inclined to engage in, however. But thinking about the world we would like to create and live in seems to me to be linked with thinking about the self, our humanity and identity. Conceiving of the EAP class as a space where issues of power should be addressed shows, in my view, concerns about the human being, about treating everyone equally by raising awareness that ‘power, [like anything else], is negotiated among human beings’ (Foucault, in Benesch, 2001).

Chun (2015) identifies two different meaning of what being critical is in his data. To start with, he observes that the teacher and the students have different views of what it is to be critical. For one of the students being critical is being engaged with the topic they are investigating, as well as reading and discussing opposing views on the topic. The students expressed the view that their ‘performative identities in the classroom’ depend on their engagement with the topic and materials (ibid.:64). For the teacher, being critical is being sceptical about what they read. The teacher’s view of criticality is, in Chun’s words, aligned with critical reading or critical thinking, terms which come from the liberal-humanist philosophical tradition (ibid.:50-51). He contrasts the latter meaning of the critical with that embedded in critical literacy which “‘views textual meaning making as a process of construction’ and focuses on ‘elements of context, historical, social and political dimensions of power relations’” (Patel Stevens and Bean, 2002: 311 in Chun, ibid.). He points out that the different understandings of the critical ‘affect and shape how specific meanings are made in [that] classroom’ (ibid.:51).

Chun (2015) mediates the experiences of an EAP teacher and her different groups of students in the course of two years. He observes that both the teacher’s beliefs on the topics they discuss and on pedagogy, and the students’ identities influence the way each group makes meaning. Chun shares material and knowledge about critical literacy with her and when she puts it in practice the dynamics and the participants’ meaning-making process in the classroom change positively. One of the topics the teacher chooses to work on is globalisation. Chun suggests that the perceived lack of engagement of some of the students in one term is connected to the students’ lack of interest in the topic. However, his data also seems to indicate that it may be due to

the type of rapport and dynamics established in the classroom. It is the teacher who always initiates and directs moves in her own ways. It seems that a more student-led discussion of the material could engage students more. In Benesch's words (2001), it is more about how we teach than about what we teach and who chooses the content.

Chun (op. cit.) defines being critical in the classroom as creating dialogic spaces that enable students and teachers to create meaning with what they already know and have experienced, which 'can run counter to hegemonic discourses'. In other words, being critical is to allow one's own embodied knowledge to question and contest the neoliberal discourses that present themselves to us as commonsensical and true (ibid.:151-152). Chun has also said that being critical in critical literacy approaches to English language teaching is reading with and against the text (Janks, 2010: 22 in Chun, ibid: 149). In short, his view of being critical is to allow one's own voice, that is, one's own embodied knowledge, to speak back to the text, in order to create meaning which may contest the world view presented in the text.

In his view of the critical, Chun does not seem to emphasise, as McPeck (1981) does, the need to have epistemological knowledge of the topic in question. Instead he highlights the student's own experiences and understandings of the topic in question as key components to challenge possible dominant discourses in texts. He explicitly points out that 'being critical does not mean teachers have to display an "expert" knowledge of politics and history' (Chun, 2015:151). Even though this seems to be true, that is, that English language teachers cannot have expertise about varied disciplinary domains, he does not seem to say that in order to be critical teachers and students need to attempt to have as much expert knowledge about the topic they are discussing as possible. This could be attempted by reading different relevant sources and approaching each of them in the manner Chun suggests.

It is worth noting that McPeck (ibid.), unlike Chun, defines critical thinking in the context of general education, not in language teaching or EAP. If one wanted to fit his view within the context of language teaching, it would well align with views of subject-specific academic language teaching, to study specific content that teachers and students are already studying.

Going back to the EAP context in Higher Education in the UK, whether the topics learners discuss are always politically, socially and locally-motivated, and whether

these discussions involve questioning assumptions and challenging different viewpoints could be argued.

Chun (2015) posits the question of how teachers can ensure that students are encouraged rather than restrained from making meaning by themselves (ibid.:120). Connected to this question, there is another question that seems important to ask, which is how teachers can facilitate the deepest meaning-making processes. Chun (ibid.: 102) notes that more examples of critical pedagogy in practice are needed as they can be useful for teachers like his colleague. He acknowledges later in his work that practitioners must explore their own contexts (ibid.:120).

Chun observes that in trying to implement critical literacy in her classroom, the teacher was perhaps hindering rather than encouraging students to make meaning by themselves. Thus he warns against following research ‘wholesale’ (ibid.:120) and suggests that interested practitioners should investigate ways of doing this that work for them and their students.

## **2.4 Critical Pedagogy**

Critical Pedagogy (Freire, 2011) aims at empowering educators and learners to become aware of and challenge dominant oppressive socio-cultural and political discourses, and to have hope that there are possibilities of developing more just socio-cultural and political practices. Thus, this section includes an exploration into the relationship between criticality and ideology (2.4.1); the shift from a progressive to a radically conservative or conservatively radical education in the UK (2.4.2); the public versus the marketised university (2.4.3); the neoliberal university in language teaching (2.4.4); the social and the political as part of the curriculum (2.4.5); and democracy, dialogue and participation (2.4.6).

### **2.4.1 Criticality and its relationship with ideology**

This meaning of criticality is somehow related to 2.5.3 below that refers to having a sceptical disposition towards facts. Under consideration in the present section is being sceptical about ideas and beliefs presented as facts (Freire, 2011). Freire (ibid.) argues that educating demands being critical of ideologies. He refers to being critical

as an attitude or a disposition towards ideas and beliefs created about the world we live in. In particular he condemns the neoliberal ideology which embraces an ethics guided by the market. Instead he strongly believes in an ethics for the human being. As an educator it is important for him to resist ideas and practices whose aim is to make profit in detriment of the well-being of people. He argues that the dominant current ideology with its emphasis on the benefits of globalisation makes one believe both, that we are all the same when in reality a few get richer and richer and the majority get poorer and poorer, and that this capitalist system is the best or only possible way of living in this world. He believes that technology and science can be put to a good use if created to the benefit of people, not with the sole purpose of making profit. He rejects the discourse that makes us believe that all we can do in this world is to adapt to it. All human beings are moved by an inquisitive force to understand the world; but they get lost if their freedom to enquire and question it is taken away, that is, if they are made believe that they cannot do anything about it but accept it as it is. He gives a list of examples of commonplace statements about the world that are presented as if they were true in all cases. These totalising pieces of discourse reject difference, divide and discriminate. It is vital for Freire to have a 'critical' attitude to such discourse, by deploying a 'methodical suspicion/ distrust' (my own translation) about ideology that is presented as the only truth (ibid.:125), what McPeck (1981) refers to as 'reflective scepticism'. He finishes his point by saying that the more we welcome difference, without fear or prejudice, the more we get to know ourselves and get closer to who we really are (ibid.:117-26).

It is worth noting that being critical entails performing a reflective and sceptical attitude not only towards ideas one would tend to disagree with but especially towards beliefs one holds. This is why being confronted with opposing views of the world and with difference, is key to practising a critical and open-minded attitude. Moore's (2014) sixth meaning of the critical, '(6) being critical necessarily had an ethical, even an activist quality about it' resonates with this ideological aspect of criticality. The word 'ethical' seems to imply that opposing views, or 'what is morally right and wrong' (Cambridge Dictionary Online, 2015) should be considered. In this sense, Freire's (2011) engagement in discussions of neoliberal and anti-neoliberal ideology/discourse could be regarded as a consideration of what is morally right and wrong. The 'activist' quality of criticality referred to by Moore

(2014) may be interpreted as fighting for those beliefs that seem morally, ethically right, as well as consistently exposing those beliefs to scrutiny. According to the Cambridge Dictionary Online (2015), an activist is ‘a person who believes strongly in political or social change and takes part in political activities such as public protests to try to make this happen’. However, one might feel tempted to think that there is some contradiction between having a reflectively sceptical attitude towards ideas and beliefs on the one hand and advocating them on the other hand. This seems to suggest that only one meaning of criticality does not seem to be sufficient to convey what being critical is. Apart from being sceptical about beliefs and ideas presented as facts (Freire, 2011; McPeck, 1981) being critical entails actively engaging in personal meaning-making and dialogue with others (Chun, 2015) and, among others, having information about the epistemological foundations of the field one is discussing (McPeck, 1981). All these meanings considered, then activism and criticality can be more easily interpreted as two parts in a continuum. Activism and criticality both have an individual and a social aspect to them. First, one tries to make sense of the world in one’s own terms and it is when confronted with the other, with different views, with other social actors that one’s ability to be critical is challenged. Depending on how strong one feels about certain ideas and beliefs and how comfortable one feels with taking social and political change in one’s own hands, one will engage in activism. This leads us to a consideration of what forms of activism teachers and students can engage with, whether activism occurs only in the streets or whether it can happen in the classroom and among colleagues via one’s own performativity. This activist meaning of criticality is a very interesting point which has been very much the focus of Critical English for Academic Purposes (Benesch, 2001; Chun, 2015).

Freire’s (2011) move against neoliberal discourses dates back to the 1990s but it is still relevant today. In 2010 university fees in the UK tripled; and market-driven values might now seem a commonplace to young people starting a university course. Below is a short account of the more than 50 years of neoliberal discourse in education in the UK.

### **2.4.2 From a progressive to a radically conservative or conservatively radical education in the UK**

Up until the beginning of the 1960s the education system in England and Wales was progressive, that is, it was a learner-centred education focused on providing learners with tools to explore their questions and their existing knowledge by themselves. The government let the teachers' unions and all the professionals involved in the educative enterprise make most of the decisions about the curriculum, assessment and organisation. During the 1960s and 1970s economic problems and a growing dislike for the nature of such education, characterised by freedom, autonomy, left-wing thinking and being a welfare state provision, were the perfect excuse to blame education and to propose a change. The education system, as it was, was not convenient to politicians anymore. England and Wales needed to use education to boost the economy by preparing students to work in industry, turning students and their parents into customers and consumers, and education into a good. The government would need to take control off the teachers' unions and independent control bodies over the administration of education. This would need to be centralised now; teacher training centres would ensure that all teachers get the same training outside of the university, turning their careers more into trades than into professions; and the curriculum and assessment would need to be standardised. It was Margaret Thatcher who attacked the unions and proposed major changes when she came into power in 1979. Education was being criticised and blamed for all the existent problems in the UK for almost thirty years until the 1988 Education Reform Act (ERA) was passed. This reform, which included, among seven other key changes, the 'restructuring of Higher Education', has changed the education system forever. Currently, even though there is an emphasis on learner autonomy in university documents, the reality is that the market continues to dictate the administration of the university. In other words, standardisation and accountability continue guiding education since the early 1960s when the progressive education that had been in place began to be attacked and transformed (Watson, 1991:347-366).

### 2.4.3 The public versus the marketised university

In the 'Introduction' to *A Manifesto for a Public University*, Holmwood (2011) contrasts the state of the university from the 60s as expressed in the Robbins Report (1963) with the current state of it as expressed in the Browne Report (2010). The first one emphasised that the public university is there to extend students' possibilities of self, as a condition of citizenship and as full participation in economic, cultural and political life. Social scientific knowledge should facilitate public debate and criticism. More universities were opened after the first report was issued, and in 1992 polytechnics were incorporated into universities. In contrast, the latter report advocated for a marketised university. This has meant that students were to fund their studies; that the university's aim was more concerned with fulfilling private interests in teaching, learning and research; and that inequality became larger as only those who can afford paying for fees could access it. Holmwood (ibid.) associates the crisis in the public university with a crisis in society, whose people have come to accept what the latter report and the present government advocate. Moreover, the present university is now a tool for social mobility within a system of inequality. He recognises the importance of using social scientific knowledge to make public policy, which is being advocated nowadays, but at the same time, argues that that knowledge should be critical and should be used to hold governments to account. The present university also emphasises audit measures. In summary, while the former university offered a public good, the latter offers a positioned good.

Halfman and Radder (2017) have edited a collection of reports from 14 countries, including the UK, which are responses to an article they had written two years before intitled 'Academic Manifesto: From an Occupied to a Public University' (Halfman & Radder, 2015). In it Watermayer (2017) writes a report of the UK scenario with a focus on the Research Excellence Framework, which is a call to critique and stand against this 'grossly imperfect system' together. This report is in line with Holmwood's (2011) *A Manifesto for the Public University* presented above. Watermayer's (2017) words below show how criticality continues being under threat in the current REF-led academia and therefore in need of being defended:

Where universities have surrendered their status and role as sanctuaries of critical pedagogy and have allowed, seemingly with little resistance, the de-professionalisation and de-politicisation of their academic community, academics have had to confront the impossible challenge of reconciling ever-greater demands of accountability with ever-diminishing autonomy. (Watermayer, 2017)

#### **2.4.4 The neoliberal university in language teaching**

Block et al. (2012) argue that, in order for interdisciplinary work within Applied Linguistics to be fully socially constituted, it must take account of the political economy of contemporary capitalism. They argue that interdisciplinarity in the social sciences has been happening for more than 50 years now and interdisciplinary Applied Linguistics studies seem to have ignored or only cursorily dealt with the economic and material bases of human activity and social life. Within Applied Linguistics there has been a disregard to debate ‘neoliberalism’. Some scholars have talked about the market ethos, marketisation and the market society instead. In contrast, they consider that it is important to take account of the former within our discipline to keep in line with mainstream educational debates. They regard the interplay between language, language teaching and neoliberalism. Neoliberalism is an ideology by which the market rules. Their book focuses on the impact of this neoliberal ideology on language, language teaching, and language teacher education.

My doctoral study explores spaces of freedom within this neoliberal context characterised by Block et al. (2012). In order to do this a deep understanding of how neoliberalism works in higher education seems paramount. Also the fact that a take on neoliberalism has been hardly existent within our discipline makes it an appealing and urgent task to be carried out. In chapter 6, Block and Gray (ibid.) argue that the current reflective model of teaching in higher education in the UK is denied under neoliberalism and mention the CELTA and PGCE programmes as examples of the neoliberal denial of the current reflective model of teaching in HE in the UK. Acknowledging this reality, my study will attempt to investigate the affordances and constraints in my own EAP reflective teaching within this neoliberal context in HE in the UK. My interest is in accessing whether my students are aware of this neoliberal ideology and reality, that is, of the idea and reality that the market is dictating the way we live, we are educated, etc., whether they accept or resist it, and whether their perceptions change or not in the course of an EAP programme/

module. This study will attempt to address the question of whether it is adequate to carry out this inquiry in the course of an EAP module, and adequate for whom. Questioning the adequacy of making students aware of the current capitalist ideologies shaping our world views, especially our views of teaching and learning, knowledge production and identity in higher education, in the course of an EAP module can be contested. Block et al. (op. cit.: 6, citing Ives, 2006) argue that language teaching is already a highly politicised activity.

Block et al. (ibid, citing Apple, 2004) claim that the shift from pedagogical to market values, by which a social and cooperative ethic has been replaced by an individualist and competitive business model, has generated greater inequality and more bureaucratic measures. Acknowledging this context, my own study is an attempt to access students' perceptions of this market values, their attitudes towards these values and whether they accept or resist them, and to explore what are the implications for teaching and learning in higher education in the UK. There is a sense of rushing and shortening the learning process. This seems to be linked with the impact that technological advances have had on people's accessibility to information but also with the current business model of education which focuses on generating economic growth. Economic growth per se does not seem problematic. The problem is who has access to that economic growth and what is lost or left behind in pursuit of wealth. Clearly the big loss for those who cannot have access to this education is inequality. There is a sense that another loss for those benefitting from this system could be atrophying the imagination of what is possible, and a closer connection with nature and humanitarian values. If these are the losses in adopting this model, a reconsideration of the economic model needs to be made. From a Marxist perspective, this capitalist and globalised system has been maintained by the wealthy, who are unwilling to redistribute their wealth more equally; and in the past few decades, it has expanded more widely generating wide gaps between the rich and the poor (ibid., citing Mason, 2009).

To draw a comparison with the effect of neoliberalism in other disciplines, I will mention Back's (2015) case. He argues that W.E.B. Du Bois and Stuart Hall, two Black sociologists, whose compelling ways of doing sociology, of writing and of living their lives, would not have had a place in the present UK universities characterised by an audit culture that narrows the sociological imagination. These

have been important personalities who have written vastly in different styles, and using different genres to reach different audiences. Their use of poetry and literary prose, which can tell sociology in more compelling ways, would not have been acceptable today. Unless this changes, sociology is at risk of losing great knowledge contributors. He argues that it is necessary to make sociology more inclusive of a wider range of ways of doing sociology, and of those voices who have been segregated for their race. Back (ibid.) calls for inclusivity of both people and ways of knowledge dissemination.

Within Applied Linguistics, a comparable neoliberal trace might be identified in regarding practitioner research as second-rated research. Fortunately, this is changing little by little, and efforts are being made by some academics, practitioners and organisations to encourage practitioner research, in order to include firsthand teacher and student educative experiences, broadening both, ways of doing research and access to research in the field.

#### **2.4.5 The social and the political as part of the curriculum**

Morgan (1998, in Chun, 2015:104) claims that ‘to a remarkable degree, our profession has historically constructed itself as a closed system [...] disconnected from the local contexts where language instruction takes place’. The social and political are very often not part of the language curriculum. There are, however, examples of work done to bring the social and local idiosyncrasies to the language learning realm. Fonseca’s (2003) work on learner autonomy in the English language school context is an example. He enhances what is already there in the culture and the everyday lives of the kids he teaches, which he calls ‘the carnivalesque’. Seeing that the kids were singing songs outside of the classroom he brings that to the classroom. Because it was related with their lives and idiosyncrasies, children would be able to share what they had learned, with their families and friends. In the context of Higher Education in Portugal, Vieira (2003) argues that regardless of the constraints inherent in any educational institution and system, teachers can find ways of appropriating the curriculum and making it relevant to them. In other words, teachers should find spaces to let their own voices be heard.

#### **2.4.6. Democracy, dialogue and participation**

Koczanowicz (nd.; 2008; 2014) discoursing on democracy and the politics of everyday, refers to democracy as social dialogue in search of understanding, not agreement. This is very relevant for a study of criticality which is concerned with dialogue, participation, society and understanding. Also his explicit clarification that the aim of dialogue and participation is not to reach consensus is enlightening in a discussion of criticality, which is often associated with being argumentative, which is often understood as considering opposing views and arguing in favour of one of them. Perhaps it is the term ‘argumentative’ that sometimes is interpreted in this binary, dichotomous fashion, therefore affecting the way critical thinking is understood. Also being argumentative is often associated with the purpose of convincing and seeking agreement, as if it was about selling a product. However, if we understand the term ‘argumentative’ as arguing in favour of one position while acknowledging other differing voices; and as seeking understanding rather than consensus, then the same could apply to criticality, argumentative essay writing and the field of EAP in general. Dewey (1916), Giroux (2011), McLaren (2015), all theorise on the relationship between pedagogy and democracy; education and society; participation; education for citizenry and social justice.

### **2.5 Critical thinking**

In this section the concept of critical thinking will be explored as: an epistemological rather than a logical concept (2.5.1); as examining one’s own consciousness: metacognition and epistemology (2.5.2); as sceptical inclination, attitude or disposition (2.5.3); and as having specialist knowledge (2.5.4).

#### **2.5.1 Critical thinking as an epistemological rather than a logical concept**

Critical thinking has been theorised differently in the literature. Some thinkers regard it as a general thinking skill that once learned one could apply it directly to any subject matter. As such it was defined as the ability to do logics, that is, to evaluate the truth of propositions following logical operations including deductive and inductive thinking (McPeck, 1981). The proponents of this view support teaching

critical thinking generally and isolated from specialised content, assuming that students will be able to apply these general thinking skills to their own specific disciplines. McPeck (ibid.) criticizes this view for its general scope. Instead he argues that critical thinking is necessarily about a specialised subject matter. He claims that a critical thinker is someone who has knowledge of the epistemic foundations of a discipline, which enables them to be critical, that is to have a doubtful attitude toward the discourse within that discipline. For him having common sense knowledge and general thinking skills is not enough for a person to be critical.

McPeck (ibid.) sets out to answer what is critical thinking and what it is not, and whether it is teachable and if so how to teach it. He acknowledges that this concept is consistently used 'in curriculum proposals ranging from courses in Latin to logic and clever puzzle games' (ibid: 2), and argues that 'it refers to the way thinking is done, not to what is thought in that way'. This way 'involves certain scepticism or suspension of assent towards a given statement, established norm or mode of doing things [...]; it considers alternative hypotheses and possibilities' (ibid: 6). McPeck (ibid.) argues that critical thinking is always about something and therefore that modules or courses on teaching critical thinking are unnecessary. Critical thinking, he argues, is both a skill and a disposition. The former can be taught, and the latter can be developed by example or by creating an environment that is conducive to such inclination to use it in the classroom.

Passmore (in McPeck, 1981: 7) argues that one can question things but still not be critical. 'Learning to think critically is in large measure learning to know when to question something, and what sorts of questions to ask'. 'The purpose of this scepticism is not to be disagreeable but to advance progress toward the resolution of a problem. And it is reflective if it demonstrates a quality or level of deliberation that at least appears to be capable of offering a plausible alternative' (ibid: 9). 'Critical thinking is a particular aspect of rationality, reasoning' (ibid: 12). 'Logic can help a student justify some thesis or argument, but it cannot help him discover one' (ibid: 16).

Critical thinking is concerned with understanding what constitutes good reasons for various beliefs, rather than with logic and reasoning skills. In other words, the major requirements for the rational assessment of some statement or argument are

epistemological, not logical, in character. The logic approach minimises the role of information and its complexities, a consequence of which is shown in the reliance on the distinction between conceptual vs empirical, and the deductive vs inductive (ibid: 30-31). The author claims that there are at least significant semantic and epistemic differences that distinguish discreet fields (what he calls a weak view of differences between subject matter). He identifies a strong view by which each field has its own logic (its own syntactical differences).

The relationship between critical thinking and education is far more important and intimate than has been recognised by proponents of critical thinking courses. It is a necessary condition for education. 'One must have a justification for one's belief in order to distinguish knowledge from mere true opinion' (ibid: 35). Arriving at a justification requires the agent to integrate the belief within his belief system (ibid: 37). He objects to the prevailing view of the concept of critical thinking, that is, to Ennis' analysis of critical thinking as the correct assessment of statements, and argues that 'critical thinking is not a generalised ability; it is linked conceptually with particular activities and special fields of knowledge' (ibid: 56). In other words, he argues, unlike Ennis, that terms like 'critical thinking' and 'rationality' do not denote generalised skills (ibid: 57).

McPeck argues against Edward de Bono's study of thinking because it is too simplistic and regards thinking as a generalised skill, that is, a skill that can be applied to the study of any problem regardless of whether the person has knowledge and information of the subject matter. McPeck also disagrees that 'these skills can be seen as neutral spectacles that enable students to perceive problems more clearly' (109). He claims that thinking is always about something and that knowledge and information about the subject matter is necessary for that thinking to be of any value. Edward de Bono focuses on the processes involved in the thinking operations rather than on the thinking about a specific subject matter and therefore on the transferability of skills from problem to problem regardless of field and of whether the person has knowledge and information about it.

After examining tests for critical thinking, namely the Watson-Glazer and the Cornell tests, McPeck concludes that they fail to test critical thinking as he conceives it, namely, as 'the propensity and skill to engage in an activity with reflective scepticism' (McPeck, 1981:152). What these tests test reflects the underlying

understanding of what these tests' developers understand for the concept of critical thinking. McPeck claims that the Watson-Glazer test tests reading comprehension more than critical thinking, and that the Cornell Critical Thinking Tests' multiple choice nature does not permit the judgements that are required by the concept of critical thinking, and that it is more a test of informal logic, which still lacks precision. Instead, he argues that critical thinking can be tested if (1) individual judgements are part of the equation, if (2) the emphasis is on the way answers have been supported, if (3) the test taker has information and knowledge about its content, and (4) if the test results are not 'used as a measure of one's capacity or innate ability, but as a learned accomplishment - which is usually the result of specific training or experience'. Thus he suggests that essays are good tools to test critical thinking, for example as part of subject courses of which students have knowledge and information (McPeck, 1981:145).

McPeck (1981) argues that reflective scepticism minimally requires knowledge of the field in question and in particular knowledge of the epistemic foundations of that field. In other words, he claims that the core ingredient of critical thinking is foundational knowledge. Since critical thinking is for McPeck both a disposition and a skill, he argues that a person can have a disposition to think critically in all areas, in the sense that they try to do this, but they are not critical thinkers unless they have an understanding of the area/ field in which they are being critical (156). He argues that when common sense cannot solve a problem, subject-specific information is necessary, and hence the justification for subject-oriented courses. Critical thinking encompasses the analysis and study of the various kinds of good reason for belief.

McPeck (1981) argues that being critical involves questioning the foundations of the field one is studying; in other words, being critical engages one in interrogating the epistemology of the field in question. Bhambra (2014) in an article on the intersection between race, segregation and US sociology, takes a critical approach to enquiring about race and segregation in US sociology currently. Following McPeck's concept of critical thinking, Bhambra is being critical since she is engaging with epistemological considerations within the field she is studying. To be more precise, she argues that Black sociologists have contributed considerably to the development of American sociology and that regarding Black American sociology as separate and marginal to the main constitution of American sociology is a mistake

which continues being reproduced unless a critical enquiry of the foundational knowledge of the disciplines is made and brought to the light. This study is an example of what McPeck calls critical thinking and what I am interested in enquiring within the context of my own teaching practice, that is, (1) whether it is feasible and if so desirable to promote this, in other words, whether students manage to engage with foundational knowledge of the field they have to write about or discuss; (2) whether they perceive that opportunities to do this are facilitated, what their views are on this, or whether it is desirable to do this; and (3) in what ways this can be promoted in EAP short modules/ courses in HE in the UK.

Breault (2013), based on her readings of Dewey, points out that ‘critical thinking is an inherent capacity to be nurtured and developed’. Like McPeck (1981) Breault (ibid.) argues that ‘the skills that seem to be the focus of so much of the critical thinking curricula [...] may be instrumentalities to aid in critical thinking, but in and of themselves are not critical thinking’. McPeck (ibid.) argues that ‘by default, critical independent thought has been treated as an innate capacity rather than a variety of learned abilities and has thus been left to the student’s native intelligence or to chance’ (ibid: 154).

### **2.5.2 Critical thinking as examining one’s own consciousness: metacognition and epistemology**

In *Education, Culture and Critical Thinking* Brown (1998) argues for a radical education by which learners are provided with time and tools to develop their consciousness by means of exploring questions and examining the answers to those questions by themselves. In other words, the kind of pedagogy that he argues for is about allowing students to develop their critical thinking. He says: ‘the distinctive feature of critical thinking is an explicit metacognitive awareness that there are problems about the relationship between language, thought and reality’ (ibid.:149). He adds that ‘from their beginnings, the critical traditions have been about the transformations of consciousness which are wrought when social relationships assume some of the characteristics of a democratic community of inquiry’ (ibid.:154). Brown’s views of education and critical thinking date back to the Greek critical traditions, which emphasise the epistemological and social components of

critical thinking. Regarding the relationship between culture, critical thinking, and education he claims that:

‘Critical thinking is specific to a certain kind of culture [...]. A critical, questioning attitude is one way among others of experiencing reality [...]. Passive receptivity to a world of ‘given’ facts and states can be much more than the mere absence of curiosity; it may be sanctioned by an articulated epistemology (ibid.:153). [...] For the vast majority of societies, critical self-consciousness never was an option because the social and linguistic conditions for its emergence were not fulfilled. [...] Critical thinking is liable to atrophy in an educational culture dominated by the idea of communicating particular information and skills rather than encouraging the student to explore problems and [to] question the status of her solutions’ (ibid.:157).

Brown argues that having a critical, questioning attitude is one way of experiencing reality and knowing about the world, which is only available to those socially and linguistically more developed and advanced societies. Education could play an important role in encouraging such attitude.

Brown refers to the work of John Stuart Mill substantially because they share the view that education should be concerned about the development of each individual’s consciousness. According to Brown (1998) Mill did not contribute much to education because he was too aware of the difficulty of there existing an education system that supports each individual’s consciousness development, of avoiding the transferability of knowledge and the homogeneity of the education system. ‘Mill’s account of critical thinking is a fusion of what has come to be known as metacognition - reflection on the strategies and routines we deploy in the course of thinking and learning - and more ancient problems of epistemology - fundamental conceptual enquiry about the nature of knowledge and the possibility of certainty and truth’ (ibid.:166). In other words, Mill believes that a critical thinker reflects on their thinking and learning, and questions where their firmest ideas and beliefs come from (ibid.167). He argues that thoughts depend on their history and the culture where they come from. Thus he argues that one must face these relativities of thought and challenge arguments that limit human possibilities for these usually stem from dogma or custom. This argument resonates with Freire’s (2011) critical pedagogy, especially his reference to critiquing stereotypes and clichés, Giroux’s (2011)

pedagogy of hope, and Dewey's (1916) pedagogy of possibilities. Mill's argument is epistemological, about the nature of knowledge. 'He relates educational aims directly to the unresolved problems of epistemology, ethics and politics which are real sources of human conflict' (ibid.:177).

In the context of Higher Education in the UK, Tubbs (2004) also supports the view that students should be given the opportunity to explore their own questions rather than pre-packaged ideas and knowledge to be consumed. He says: 'Too many students pass through higher education never being given the space in which to pursue the necessity of their own doubts as the substance of their degree' (ibid.: xiv). He argues that philosophy and education are intrinsically related even though this relation has not been made prominent since Socrates. In other words, he makes the case that thinking and learning are intrinsically related, and that realizing this relationship is Philosophy's 'higher education'. Philosophy's 'higher education' constitutes the learning of the thinker. 'Philosophy's higher education retrieves the oldest form of enquiry of all, 'know thyself'' (ibid: xvi). From its inception the Greek critical tradition has made the link between education and philosophy explicit. Tubbs (ibid.) brings this back 2,500 years later to make the case that the relationship between thinking and learning constitutes philosophy's higher education; in other words, both philosophy and education should be concerned with the learning individual, the process of their knowing themselves.

This point is further developed in section 2.6.3 regarding the relationship between criticality and being, subjectivity and identity.

### **2.5.3 Critical thinking as sceptical inclination, attitude or disposition**

Breault (2013) supports Dewey's characterisation of the nature of critical thinking as:

A sense of mental unrest (1910/1978), real opportunities to engage the learner to solve relevant problems (1929/1984), encouragement for playful consideration of possibilities (1899/ 1976; 1902/1976), challenges to suspend judgement (1910, 1978), and hopes for even the "audacity of imagination" (1929/1984:247)' (Breault, 2013:88)

Together with a colleague, she has involved teachers in thinking more critically about their own practice so that in turn they could start thinking of how to help their learners become more critical. If we look at the quote above, Dewey's explanatory phrases such as '*sense of mental unrest*', '*suspension of judgement*' and '*consideration of possibilities*' seem to be synonymous with what McPeck (1981) calls 'reflective scepticism' and what Freire (2011) calls 'methodical/systematic suspicion'. McPeck (ibid.) seems to be the only one though that explicitly says that critical thinking is both a disposition or attitude and a skill; that is to say, the critical thinker can have a general critical attitude to the world but they are not truly critical unless they have developed the skill to be critical about a particular object of inquiry which requires that they have knowledge and information about it.

Freire (2011) claims that the act of educating demands criticality/critical thinking. He distinguishes two kinds of curiosity, the 'ingenuous' which is associated with common knowledge, the one that comes out of experience, and the 'critical' that relates to knowledge that results from a rigorous, methodical and closer exploration of the object of inquiry. He argues that there is no clear-cut division between these two but instead there is a progression from one to the other, which nonetheless is not natural. One of the key roles of a progressive education, he argues, is to develop the 'critical' curiosity, unsatisfied and disobedient, with which we could defend ourselves from acts of 'irrationality' born out of excessive 'rationality' in our highly mechanistic world (ibid: 32-3). He points out that it is a human curiosity that moves us to do and create something that will be our own inscription in the existing world. Like McPeck (1981), Freire (ibid.) theorises criticality as an epistemological concept: that is, as knowledge that results from a deeper, consistent enquiry into an object and that is crystallised in a product that serves as the basis for further explorations. This critical inquiry involves 'methodical suspicion'.

While McPeck (1981) and Freire (2011) address the concept of criticality in education directly, Allwright (2003) devises a framework for learning, teaching and researching which he calls Exploratory Practice which, without addressing the concept of criticality in particular, aims at involving learners, teachers and researchers in critically exploring their curiosity in and outside of the classroom. Even though EP will be discussed more in detail in the methodology chapter of the current work, it seems appropriate to use Freire's conceptual development of

criticality and McPeck's emphasis on having foundational knowledge of the object of enquiry to understand EP's epistemological aims further. EP aims at engaging learners and teachers' own puzzles while developing the syllabi as it is believed that learners learn and understand the world in their own ways which should be the focus of the educative enterprise. How far they get in the knowledge continuum mentioned by Freire does not seem to have been explored in depth in EP so far. It is argued that it is up to those involved to decide when to stop exploring a puzzle and move on to another one. There is a clear implicit reference to Freire's knowledge/ curiosity development continuum which seems worth exploring more closely and explicitly. Developing this focus within EP will contribute to developing this framework further and will help EP practitioners understand EP better.

#### **2.5.4 Critical thinking as having specialist knowledge**

McPeck's (1981) insistence on acquiring knowledge of the epistemological foundations of the field, discipline or object of enquiry one is exploring as a prerequisite to being critical is a very important point which seems to be implicit in EP, in Freire's argument for criticality and in other accounts of the critical. All these other accounts focus on what the critical thinker's attitude, inclination or disposition should be like, which involves refraining from quickly judging an activity, examining opposing views, and considering imaginative possibilities, among others. EP does encourage practitioners – learners and teachers alike – to explore their own puzzles but it is not prescriptive about how to go about exploring them. It is expected that practitioners examine each other's assumptions and knowledge about a subject matter of interest, exchange and discuss ideas with others, make sense of all this information and share it. Practitioners can also work with sources in the same way; that is, they can search for sources, read them and engage with the arguments presented and make sense of them in their own way. The EP principles (Principle 1: Put 'quality of life' first; Principle 2: Work primarily to understand language classroom life; Principle 3: Involve everybody; Principle 4: Work to bring people together; Principle 5: Work also for mutual understanding; Principle 6: Integrate the work for understanding into classroom practice; and Principle 7: Make the work a continuous enterprise) (Allwright, 2003: 128-130) are conducive to embodying a cautious attitude or disposition to other practitioners and scholars' views, what

McPeck (1981) refers to as ‘reflective scepticism’ and Freire (2011) as ‘methodical suspicion’. In other words, in their attempt to understand their own questions, EP practitioners would listen to each other and possibly learn about different points of view about the issue being explored, they would refrain from judging their classmates’ view points on the basis that they are dealing with each other’s ideas and thus this work necessarily involves trust and respect; and they would possibly consider imaginative possibilities in a non-judgemental environment (Grey, 2009:131). Whether they move onto examining information about the epistemological foundations of the discipline or field they are trying to understand is not certain. EP claims that it is up to those involved to decide whether they would continue exploring an issue more deeply or not.

Unlike McPeck’s, in EP it is not stated whether one needs to have knowledge of the epistemological foundations of the discipline one is exploring. Via principles, EP encourages practitioners to work hard towards understanding their own life puzzles with others and for mutual development. It highlights the value of first exploring their own assumptions and knowledge about their puzzles to try to understand each other, as well as their puzzles, better. It is expected that practitioners also search for sources and discuss them in the process of knowing but this has not been made explicit within EP. As it has been said above, exploring the epistemological basis of criticality within EP can be helpful to EP as well as to EP practitioners.

EP appears not to explicitly focus on the degree of progressive development from ingenuous to critical curiosity, that is, on whether there is a real progression from ingenuousness to criticality.

## **2.6 Critical Theory**

This section explores how critical theory can contribute to understanding criticality more broadly. First, a critique of reason and critical thinking as absolute ideals is presented; second, an analysis of the place of the critical within post-structuralism and humanism is presented; and third, the concept of the critical is related to the concepts of self, being, becoming and identity.

### **2.6.1 A critique of reason and critical thinking as absolute ideals**

Post-structuralism is not only a critique of humanism but of all things associated with the Western European discourse, with the enlightenment, and modernity. Vazquez (2011) argues that modernity's, Europe's or the West's way of knowing has been the centre of attention and its visibility may have created the illusion that it is the only existent mode of knowing the world. In other words, he puts forward a critique of this Western epistemic realm to expose what has been left unattended in an attempt to highlight its value. One element of this modernity's epistemic terrain that is relevant for this study is critical thinking. He acknowledges that critical thinking is constitutive of a Euro-centric, modern and Western discourse, characterised by its totalising, categorising, rationalising effects. He acknowledges the efforts made by scholars from within this context to critique this discourse such as Heidegger, Foucault, Derrida, Adorno and Horkheimer, and at the same time, calls for critiques from outside this realm. These French and German intellectuals founded post-structuralism. They studied the Greek thinkers and explored the discourse in northern Africa. These encounters with 'difference' were fundamental in the development of their critique, that is, of their understanding of the struggles involved in performing difference or changes in one's identity as a result of one's encounters with different discourses, in other words, of a theory of the relationship between subject and discourse. At the same time as they explored other discourses, they mainly deconstructed their own Euro-centric discourse. Vazquez (2011) seems to draw our attention to the dangers of becoming prescriptive about what way of knowing, being and thinking one must take. In modern Western Europe reasoning became an extraordinary way of knowing the world and since then it has had widespread influence. Vazquez's critique seems to be directed to its totalising effect rather than to its value.

Critical thinking is considered constitutive of this discourse (Vazquez, 2011), that is, an element of a Western European way of thinking characterised by reason. Vazquez (ibid.) critiques the way this discourse has been attended to, as if it was the only existent one. In the UK critical thinking is an essential element in the syllabi in Higher Education. In English language modules for international students this seems to be stressed even more strongly, which is indicative of an awareness that in some contexts critical thinking might not be so prominently encouraged and of the need to

ask students to think in this way. The question that arises from this is whether only one way of thinking and expressing oneself should be encouraged, or whether the students' varied ways of thinking, understanding and expressing themselves should also be explored in Academic English language modules for international students in Higher Education in the UK. Critical thinking in Higher Education is mainly crystallised in academic language, which has been criticised, both inside and outside the academia, for its dryness and its rigid structures and features (Rothman 2014; Derounian, 2011; Back, 2015). Like in Vazquez (op. cit.), there have been other efforts made by some academics to represent formal thought in more creative ways that may be more appealing to some people. The special issue on innovative ways of presenting research in the *ELTED journal* (Banegas & Smith, 2016) is an example of this. Despite the form it might take, in academia, reasoning seems to be the prevailing and most valuable episteme.

Langan (1966) writes about Merleau-Ponty's *Critique of Reason*. He presents the view that formal thought 'lives off intuitive thought' and that all the expressions or formalisations of thought found history and are the incomplete products of perception in time. These formalisations of thought at the same time open up possibilities of further exploiting the object of enquiry (ibid.: 77, 78, 80, 82, 276). Reason is thus regarded as in-time, incomplete, subjective formalisations of thought, which nonetheless constitutes man's conquest over time. In the context of education Freire (2011) presents the same argument by arguing that common-sense knowledge and critical thinking move along the same continuum; in other words, one moves from common-sense knowledge to critical thinking. This has implications for classroom pedagogy. The students' intuitive thought should be given space if it is regarded as the starting point in the 'knowing' continuum. At the same time this seems to resonate with students' interests and epistemic questions and needs, which as Brown (1998) and Tubbs (2004) argue, should be the basis from which learning and teaching starts in the context of formal education. Each individual should be given opportunities to develop their epistemic curiosity into formal thought. None of these thinkers would disagree with the value of exercising criticality and of formalising those critical thoughts as these will be men's legacy over time, as Langan (1966) argued in relation to Merleau-Ponty's critique of reason.

This again brings up the question of whether Vazquez (2011) would disagree with the latter argument. It seems that he would argue that there is as much value in formalising critical thought as there is in representing feelings and intuition - as alternative ways of knowing the world - via poetry, painting and other forms of artistic creation. By critiquing modernity's episteme, he makes the point that reasoning should not have been exalted as the supreme way of knowing the world. He warns us against taking critical thinking or anything else as the only and pivotal access to knowledge. He claims that outside Western Europe other forms of knowing are valued and should be equally acknowledged. He argues that critiques both from within this discourse, and from outside it, are necessary. He mentioned some poststructuralists who critiqued their own epistemic realm. But it is important to highlight that they experienced other epistemic realms outside of Europe, which surely influenced their need to critique their own discourse and develop the movement called post-structuralism.

So far, two critiques have been presented. The first one refers to critical thinking as a constitutive element of a way of seeing the world, which has been associated with the Western European Enlightenment and a focus on reason as the best way of knowing the world. The second one is a critique of reason as formal thought. In other words, the latter is a clarification that even formal thought is born out of intuitive thought and it is the product of subjective observations in time. Nonetheless the value of these formalisations is recognised as the fundamental contribution of men in history and the basis from which further formalisations, that is, understandings and interpretations, are created. In other words, the first critique seems to be against the exaltation of modernity's epistemic framework because it creates the illusion that this is the only way of knowing the world. The latter is a reconceptualization of reason, formal thought or critical thinking as incomplete formalisations, which are nevertheless important.

### **2.6.2 The critical within post-structuralism and humanism: on critiquing the dominant discourse and dealing with difference**

Before discussing what is the critical in EAP in particular, I would like to reflect on the relationship between post-structuralism and humanism as currents of thought and

views of the world which are related to the critical and inform this study. As I have argued above, post-structuralism proposes that the subject is influenced and created by discourse, that is, by the traditions, practices, and beliefs of the world they inhabit. Views of gender, class, and race, for example, are discourse bound; in other words, they are already there in the world and create the subject. This means that the subject is not completely free from the discourse that creates them. Criticality could be considered a tool at hand to critique the discourse around them; by questioning discourse, one's identity and persona is affected, or, in the post-structural jargon, the subject is in a constant process of 'becoming'. This current of thought is very much in line with a constructivist view of the world by which the subject is constructed by discourse and at the same time the subject constructs discourse through language and everyday practices. In comparison, humanism is sometimes contrasted with post-structuralism. Humanism is a current of thought that is concerned with the well-being of human beings; it disdains terrorism, wars, in other words, disdainful acts originated in hatred, intolerance and extremism by human beings to human beings. Criticality is a key concept in humanism too for the same reasons that it is important in post-structuralism, that is, as a tool to question the values, beliefs, and customs one holds and practices in order to be more accepting of and to value difference. In his book *Humanism and Democratic Criticism*, Said (2004) highlights the importance of the humanist especially in the present time characterised by wars, terrorism and all kinds of deadly actions that uncover a devalue for fellow human beings. Humanism is concerned with the human being and with questioning what is given. As an example, Said (2004) mentions his questioning the design of the curriculum in the Humanities, which at the university where he was working was composed of the classic Western thinkers. He questioned the polarisation of Western versus Eastern or Oriental thinking, arguing that adding different cultural and traditional perspectives on the world might be an enriching humanistic experience. On the other hand, humanism has been associated with Europe, the enlightenment, rationalism and universalism (Malik, 2012). Perhaps as Malik (ibid.) has argued these two frameworks, namely post-structuralism and humanism, have been designed for different purposes and it might not be fair and appropriate to compare them. Regarding what concerns this study, namely 'the critical', both humanism and post-structuralism seem to embrace criticality as a pivotal characteristic of a person who cares about human beings and therefore is tolerant of and finds value in

difference, as well as of a person who constructs a discourse that differs from the prevailing one on matters such as equality, gender, class, sex, and race.

Within education, Moskowitz (1978, in Allwright and Hanks, 2009: 43,66) argues that the humanist approach is concerned with learners as 'whole beings' and with the learners' socio-emotional growth. If humanism is understood in this way, it does not seem to be in opposition to post-structuralism which is concerned with uncovering unjust forms of understanding the world. However, the main argument in support of placing these two currents at opposing ends is regarding their respective positions on the individual. In humanism, the individual is perceived as forcing herself or himself to be good, whereas in post-structuralism, the subject is in a constant process of 'becoming', that is, of co-constructing their 'identity' against the constraints imposed by the prevailing societal discourse they have been created by and are embedded in. In the former case, the individual is understood as being mobilised by a self-imposed desire to be good, nice to others; in the latter, the subject is motivated by a desire to develop their own identity. However, as has been said above, when it comes to the focus of this study, namely criticality, both movements seem to give it a pivotal place. Before further developing the place of the term 'critical' in these two perspectives on the subject, first it might be worth exploring both what being nice entails and what developing one's own identity means in order to find out whether there is some common ground. Being nice can be interpreted as being respectful, and understanding of people's different points of views; a humanist does not tolerate injustice, discrimination, extremism, terrorism, attacks on people for their ideas. On the other hand, developing one's identity involves constantly questioning oppressive forms of discourse - practices and beliefs - that constitute us; and performing practices and beliefs that liberate human beings from unjust social, political and cultural practices through language and actions. Having dug into these two perspectives on the subject, it seems that there is much more in common between them than one is made to believe in the literature on these currents of thought. The latter perspective on the subject is clearly driven by the ideology that all human beings should have the same opportunities, that power is performed, negotiated, constructed among people rather than given or possessed (Foucault, 1980), that class, race and gender are constructs that can be challenged in order to liberate those people who are oppressed by these fixed ideas of what is to be rich, poor, Asian,

White, Black, female and male. Regarding the former, a humanist, it seems, is concerned about the same issues as a post-structuralist does. Perhaps the difference lies in a certain focus on the socio-affective well-being of the individual in the former, whereas the focus in the latter seems to be on the purpose, on discourse. In other words, while a humanist might prioritise the socio-affective well-being of the individual, a post-structuralist might prioritise the accomplishment of the cause irrespective of the affective strain caused. This is why humanism by valuing the person's socio-affective well-being has been accused of being naïve (Allwright and Hanks, 2009:44).

In this context, the question of where criticality is placed in this debate emerges. It has already been mentioned that criticality is very much a constitutive aspect of both approaches. What still needs to be discussed is the relationship between criticality and the 'socio-affective' aspect of the individual. In education, as will be shown later on in this chapter, criticality has been associated with the 'socio-affective' aspect of the individual (Grey, 2009). Individuals might dare to speak their minds, to make mistakes, to ask questions, to disagree and to discuss different sides of an issue if they are given the space, if teachers are not threatened by their students' criticality, if their voices are considered valuable and respected by the teacher, in an environment which is not dictated by fear but rather by empathy, mutual understanding, collaboration and support. These qualities are very much socio-affective aspects of the learning situation which play a key role in supporting students' criticality, students' own meaning making (Chun, 2015). As Allwright and Hanks (2009) have mentioned, this aspect of the educative experience has been misinterpreted and turned into 'compulsory psychotherapy' or personal tutorials where teachers act as advisors or students are asked to talk about their personal issues. In humanism, the socio-affective aspect of education is concerned with taking students seriously, respecting and taking into account their previous knowledge, providing them with space to explore, be right and wrong without judging them. In other words, humanism in education mirrors humanism anywhere else.

Finally, it will be worth examining the question of whether, and if so to what extent, the socio-affective aspect of the individual is related to a post-structural perspective on education. Grey's study (2009:126) on difference in an EAP programme is framed following post-structural principles, especially the works of Foucault (1980),

Deleuze (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987; Deleuze & Parnet, 2002) and Butler (1990). She supports the view that has been posited above about the post-structural subject as that which has been formed by discourse but nonetheless can struggle for transformation in the repetitive performance of difference. Regarding the role of affection in the performance of difference, she argues that ‘the affective interactions between the students indicate a tentative openness to different possibilities’ (ibid: 131). There seems to be a correlation between being affective and embracing difference. In other words, the involvement of emotions is tied to the encounter and performance of difference in a group.

Going back to the difference between humanism and post-structuralism regarding accounts of the subject, post-structuralism is explicit about the struggle (Grey, 2009:126) involved in the act of performing identity when one encounters and wishes to assimilate difference. Humanism, as is argued (ibid.), claims that the individual is free to choose which aspects of difference they wish to incorporate without acknowledging the struggles they have to engage in against the discourse forces that act upon them. Having said this and acknowledging the immense contribution post-structuralism has made to our understanding of the complex processes involved in the construction of one’s identity, it seems unfair to disregard or disqualify humanism as naïve for not having developed this specific aspect. It would be fair to recognise the contribution that humanism has made as a starting point instead of disregarding it completely.

### **2.6.3 The critical and the concepts of self, being, becoming and identity**

Regarding ‘being’, Heidegger devoted his life to the study of ‘being’, which he understands as the fundamental question that has been forgotten since Socrates. Unlike the Western philosophical tradition after Socrates which focused on the binary study of a perfect, absolute entity and its realisation in reality, he argues that there is not a Being in itself, that the Being exists only in beings. In other words, he argues that thinking of Being is pre-subjective, pre-logical, lets Being be. ‘Man is a being who understands Being. This understanding gives to man’s being its whole meaning and humanity’ (Levinas, 1967 in Steiner, 1978). Heidegger claims that Western philosophy focused on questioning existence from an analytical and rational

angle, which resonates with what is happening nowadays in the world of academia, in education, in what we teach our students in higher education. We seem to forget about Being, that is, the humanity and meaning of every man's being by focusing on teaching and testing a few concepts, rather than discussing issues which may bring students closer to 'Being'.

In his study of teachers' 'knowing' and its role in the curriculum development, Wu (2002; 2005) highlights the importance of taking account of teachers' and students' authentic knowing in the process of developing the curriculum. In other words, his study is an example of teachers resisting implementing the given curriculum, which did not take account of what the students already knew and what the teachers sensed their learners needed. Wu's study is informed by the philosophy of Heidegger, for it supports the view that teaching and learning should be about 'being'; that is, teaching and learning should be in the hands of the participants and should help participants realise their 'Being' – who they are: their views of the world, values, and so on – in their 'being' while teaching and learning. In the encounter with difference, that is, by interacting with classmates and teachers from different cultural, social, economic backgrounds, learners and teachers develop a better understanding of who they are, how their own views of the world have developed, where their own views come from, and so on. Conversely, if class time is devoted to the homogeneity and transferability of information students and teachers are deprived of the opportunity to being, expressing themselves and developing their sense of self. This does resonate with poststructuralist discussions about the subject, identity, and the process of a person's becoming as they perform discourse, which has been discussed above in this work.

After having reviewed Moore's (2014) study of meanings of the word 'critical' and Johnston et al.'s (2011) study on 'criticality development', both in HE, and explored meanings of criticality within Critical English for Academic Purposes, Critical Pedagogy, Critical Thinking and Critical, Theory, I will introduce details of the methodology in the next chapter. Firstly, I will introduce the research questions (3.2) and the context in which I conducted this study (3.3). Secondly, I will present a short review of the approaches that have informed this research, namely Pedagogy for Autonomy (3.4), Exploratory Practice (3.5) and 'Live' (3.7) Arts-enriched Research Methods (3.6). These approaches have been included in the methodology chapter

because they form part of the pedagogical and research methodology of the study. By doing this, I could devote the literature review solely to exploring criticality, which is the focus of my enquiry. Thirdly, I will discuss the ethicality of the project (3.8), the timeline of data collection and analysis (3.9), and the impact of each teaching phase on the next phase (3.10). Finally, I will explain the data collection (3.11) and analysis (3.12) processes.

## **Chapter Three: Methodology**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This study is an exploration into the meanings of criticality in my own practice, teaching academic English in higher education in the UK. My assumption is that by promoting a pedagogy for autonomy (Dam, 1995; Kuchah and Smith, 2011) which is at the same time guided by the principles of exploratory practice (Allwright and Hanks, 2009), and by using creativity as a pedagogical and research tool, criticality is promoted at the same time. I am therefore motivated to investigate not only what is meant by criticality in the literature - within critical EAP, and more broadly in critical pedagogy, critical thinking and critical theory (Chapter Two) – but also in my practice via pedagogy for autonomy, practitioner research informed by the principles of exploratory practice and via deploying ‘live’ (Back and Puwar, 2012) ‘arts-enriched’ (HEA, 2014; Knowles and Cole, 2008) research methods. Over a period of seven months (May 2014 – Dec 2014) data was collected in three successive cycles, each one being a new short course/ module. During this period my own understanding of criticality developed and each cycle was influenced by these new insights. At the same time I expected that my developing practice would itself shed light on aspects of criticality and how to promote it in the practice of EAP.

This section will first introduce the research questions and the context of this study; second, it will present a review and an explanation of the pedagogical/research frameworks that have informed this study: pedagogy for autonomy, exploratory practice, and live arts-enriched research methods. Then the data collection and analysis processes will be explained.

### **3.2 Research questions**

This study sets out to contribute to an understanding of criticality in EAP, and potentially in higher education more generally, by means of practitioner research with the following as guiding questions:

1. What signs of criticality are there in what my students and I did in the classroom?
2. To what extent and how can pedagogy for autonomy, exploratory practice and arts-enriched research methods contribute to developing criticality?

In order to answer the research questions I first analysed all the data thematically to learn what themes emerged without imposing any meanings of criticality (The thematic analysis of each teaching experience will be presented separately in Chapters 4, 5 and 6). Second, I re-read the themes across the three cycles/phases in the light of criticality as explored in the literature review (7.1). Third, I discussed the signs of criticality that I found in the three successive educative experiences in the light of the three frameworks that informed my practice: pedagogy for autonomy, EP and arts-enriched research methods (7.2).

### **3.3 Teaching contexts**

The context for this study involves three academic English language programmes that I taught consecutively over the period of seven months at two HE institutions in the UK. Since these are three different provisions, each one has its specificities, which will be presented in chapter 4-6. From now on I will refer to each teaching experience as phases or cycles. As can be seen in the table below (Table 1), the first one constitutes an EAP pre-session course delivered by a British university in the students' country of origin, China. It is a 15-hour-per-week course for 4 weeks with 8 students and it was aimed to prepare them for their studies in the UK. The second phase was also a 15-hour-per-week summer course over 4 weeks with Chinese students – most of whom were teacher students – in another university in the UK. Due to the large number of students, two groups were formed, each one comprising 17/18 students. Its purpose was to enhance students' academic skills, introduce them to the British education system and culture, and to discuss teacher development concepts and trends. Due to its eclectic nature, 4 different teachers were involved in delivering different sessions. The third phase is an EAP essay-writing-focused optional module for second-year undergraduate students from various disciplines at the same university where cycle 1 was delivered. The students are from different

national backgrounds, mainly from the Middle and Far East, Europe and Africa. The group comprised 13 students. The aim of this module is to enhance students' academic essay writing skills.

Phases	1.PSE course, China	2.Chinese students' programme, UK (2 groups)	3.Academic Essay Writing Term 1
Date	26 May - 20 June 2014	21 July - 8 Aug 2014	29 Sep 2014 – 1 Dec 2015
Length	4 weeks/ 68 hrs. (15 hours per week= 60 + 8 hours of tutorials)	4 weeks/ 39 hrs. (I taught 3 weeks, 14/ 16/ 9 hours)	10 weeks/ 2 hrs. p/w
Place	British university 1, China	British University 2, UK	British University 1, UK
Students' nationalities	Chinese	Chinese	6 Chinese, 4 Spanish, 1 Hong Kongese, 1 Nigerian and 1 Eastern Europe
Degree	Undergraduate (UG)	UG	UG
Number of students	8	17 + 18=35	13

Table 1

### 3.4 Pedagogy for Autonomy

Pedagogy for autonomy has informed my practice as it will be shown in this study. Below is a review of its main features.

Holec (1981) first introduced the idea of a pedagogy for autonomy in foreign language education whose aim is for teachers to let go of control over the decisions to be made regarding learning and teaching and to invite their students to make some of those decisions; after all it is the students who are the protagonists in the educative enterprise. Dam (1995) develops these ideas further and provides a structure for this work to be done: students get together in groups and plan what they want to work on, they do the work in the time they have decided and then share what they have done. The latter stage includes an evaluation of the work done and a plan for what needs to be completed. Materials such as books, dictionaries, among others, are available in

the classroom. Articulating learning goals, a plan of action and the evaluation of the work done is a salient feature of this kind of pedagogy, not only as a way of reflecting on learning and thus becoming more aware of what has been done and what needs to be done next but also as a way of practising their language skills. Working with others is a way of facilitating this articulation of thoughts, feelings and ideas. Reflecting about learning in writing via keeping a diary is another feature that contributes to developing student autonomy. Students share their work by creating posters.

The above-mentioned characteristics of a pedagogy for autonomy, namely decision-making, collaborative work, reflection on learning, and articulation of thoughts through speech, writing and posters have informed my practice. Besides promoting student autonomy, they seem to be conducive to student criticality. Within the literature on critical EAP, critical pedagogy and critical thinking in education, the above-mentioned features are said to promote student criticality. However, in the field of EAP, criticality, at least in the UK, seems to be usually associated with critical thinking skills as manifested in reading and writing only and not so much with features that can contribute to developing a broader educational approach to EAP.

### **3.5 Exploratory Practice**

Exploratory Practice, with its seven general principles, has informed my teaching practice and research. Below I present first, a review of its place in the wider literature of practitioner research and how it relates to other forms of teacher research such as Action Research (AR); second, a review of works that have been conducted on EP around the world; thirdly, a reflection on ways in which the principles of EP if followed in the language classroom can be conducive to criticality; and finally, the way EP has been adopted for this study.

#### **3.5.1 Practitioner Research: Action Research and Exploratory Practice**

For the purpose of this study I decided to embark on practitioner research, which is research conducted by the lecturer herself and her own students. Having explored the

feasibility of combining practitioner research and a pedagogy for autonomy via exploratory practice as part of an MA thesis and noticing as a result that both a pedagogy for autonomy and exploratory practice were closely related to criticality and creativity, I decided that I wished to explore what is meant by criticality in theory, that is in the literature, and in my own teaching practice, via arts-enriched methods, in the course of three successive EAP modules/courses I taught during the course of this doctoral study.

Exploratory Practice (Allwright, 2001, 2003; Allwright and Hanks, 2009) is one kind of practitioner research, which is conducted by the practitioner, in this case, the teacher. EP includes the learners as practitioners of their own learning, too. EP claims to be a framework for learning, teaching and researching guided by seven principles, which involve: 1) prioritising quality of life as the main issue, 2) working for understanding before attempting to solve problems, 3) involving everyone, 4) working to bring people together, 5) working for mutual understanding, 6) integrating the work for understanding into normal pedagogic practice, and 7) making the work a continuous enterprise (Allwright, 2003: 128-130).

Practitioner/ Teacher research is research conducted by practitioners, who investigate their own working context issues or questions, in order to develop a better understanding of their professional practice, of themselves and their students and to contribute to the field of study. Historically, this kind of research has been less prestigious than other forms of research whose aim is to gain generalizable insights into an object of study, or to report insights from third party research in the area of English Language Teaching. Having said this, examples of practitioner research in ELT have recently proliferated thank to efforts made by academics who support practitioner research around the world (Slimani-Rolls & Keily, 2014; Borg, 2013; Burns, 2015; Dikilitas et. al., 2015; Wyatt, 2016). Still, more examples of teacher and student research should be shared and published. Needless to say, the fact that practitioner research is not mainstream research does not imply that it is less valuable. Practitioner research empowers teachers and students by offering them the opportunity to become the agents of their own practice. It is a more democratic approach to research, which values and welcomes the voices of the protagonists in the educative endeavour, teachers and students

Action research in the field of ELT has proliferated in recent years thank to the works of Burns (2015) and Borg (2013), among others. As its name suggests, action research is research for action (Allwright, 2001). In other words, this research aims at intervening in a practice in order to solve a problem, understand an issue or improve or change a current situation. As such, it follows certain stages that can be repeated as many times as the researcher finds it necessary. Those stages are identification of a problem; plan of action; implementation of the plan; data analysis; and plan for future action, or change.

Some academics are currently involved in engaging teachers around the world in reflecting about their practice and becoming aware of the potential value that action research can bring to their lives. Currently, acknowledging the benefits of engaging teachers in doing AR, some institutions around the world are incorporating action research as a compulsory component of the programmes they offer. Burns (2014; Edwards and Burns, 2015) warns us of the risk these institutions run if they impose action research, and highlighted the importance of making teachers aware of the possibility of doing research and of giving them the option of choosing whether to do it or not, as well as the institutional support they need.

In the 1990s, Allwright (2001, 2003) started developing Exploratory Practice with his colleagues in Rio, Brazil, as a combination of teaching and research with students in the classroom. In 2001 he presented a paper in the USA in which he distinguished reflective practice from action research and exploratory practice. He put forward the argument that reflective practice is thinking for understanding; action research is action for change; and exploratory practice is action for understanding. In other words, exploratory practice brings teachers and students together in the common enterprise of working to understand what puzzles them, be it questions arising from content from the language syllabus or other life-related issues they may need to explore imminently. In this sense, exploratory practice is very flexible as it prioritises quality of life above all. This means that students are given the opportunity to choose the questions they would like to explore. Some students choose syllabus content, whereas some other students choose syllabus-unrelated topics. If students are serious about their choices these would reflect what really puzzles them at that moment and the educative classroom purpose would be achieved (Allwright and Hanks, 2009). This practice is a reminder that education is

above all an enjoyable learning experience in which everyone is given the opportunity to create knowledge, that is to say, to think by themselves and with others, to develop their ideas in an environment of trust, respect, and responsibility, among others. This practice is aligned with humanist, mundane, bottom-up, and critical approaches to education, such as Freire's (2011), as it focuses on the human being: their life concerns, constraints and aspirations.

In a world highly influenced by neoliberal conceptualisations of life in general and by instrumentalism, in which case, education becomes a commodity on sale, that is, a fixed arrangement of topics and literature to be covered in a shorter and shorter time span, it is no surprise if some teachers or academics find exploratory practice difficult to implement. Certainly this practice requires that teachers should be willing to let go of control, to work with students' topics and ideas, to arrive at a class with an open plan, and to agree with the educational philosophy behind this practice.

### **3.5.2 Previous studies informed by Exploratory Practice**

Salvi (2012; 2017) explores the feasibility of combining a pedagogy for autonomy and practitioner research via exploratory practice in an EAP course as part of an MA dissertation. This project was an attempt to implement Exploratory Practice by fostering its principles and by encouraging students to explore their own questions, if possible why-questions, the reason for this being that such questions would prompt work for understanding. Students were encouraged to explore why-questions twice during a 4-week EAP pre-session course at a university in the UK: the first time, students decided to explore one question in small groups and the second time they suggested investigating one question the whole class together as a group. The questions explored in the first EP session were '*Why is it hard to find accommodation around the university?*', '*Why are we sleepy in class?*', '*Why are we here?*' and '*Why is it hard to come up with a good idea for our library project?*', and the question explored in the second EP session was '*Why is the moon festival so important in East Asia?*'. However, students were also encouraged to work for understanding and in the spirit of EP at all times, not just in the two aforementioned EP sessions, such as when they explored syllabus content. This study shows that by following the EP principles, EP is realized naturally and in an integrated fashion

without necessarily devoting specific sessions to it as if the work for understanding was an isolated project.

Hanks' (2013, 2015a,b) doctoral study is about Exploratory Practice. She has involved teachers and students in trying it out. Her priority was the teachers' and the students' interests and she was ready to stop the work at any stage if it interfered with what they had to do as part of the course, precisely because one of the aims underpinning EP is that research becomes part of the learning and teaching that happens in the classroom, and that research is not an extra burden to the participants. She acknowledges that for much of her 'practitioner-based PhD, there was no research question and no clear method'. Eventually, her two main research questions were: (1) 'What are the challenges faced by practitioners (teachers and learners) when they try to conduct practitioner research (in this case Exploratory Practice) in an EAP context?', and (2) 'What is the relationship between principles and practices in EP?'

The main data collection tool in her study was interviews. Two teachers and seven students in each course volunteered to be part of the study, which amounts to four teachers and fourteen students in total. Despite the fact that she also 'collected artefacts such as course timetables, [and] student work such as posters and assignments', she has not used them for her analysis. She acknowledges the potential of analyzing visuals for further studies, and this is one direction my own doctoral study will take. To analyse the data she considered grounded theory and template analysis and eventually decided on the latter since she felt that its flexibility went well with her reflexive stance and that the advantages outweighed the disadvantages. Finally, for the writing up of the thesis she used narrative inquiry to represent individual stories (Hanks, 2013, 2015b).

In her case, researching her own context has been advantageous as it has allowed her to investigate the challenges that teachers face when trying to implement EP and the relationship between principles and practice in EP. In an article based on her doctoral research, Hanks (2015a) presents the learners' thoughts on EP and identifies three themes that emerged, namely, 'the novelty of being asked to puzzle about their own experiences (many said they had never been asked to do this before); the pleasure of being in a position to help others (teachers and learners); and the enjoyment that this new work promised' (ibid:126).

Supervised by Allwright and reviewed by Fairclough, Wu's (2002; 2005) PhD dissertation is informed by Exploratory Practice. Wu was working as a teacher trainer in China before coming to the UK for his PhD. While in China he was involved in a teachers' group, who, tired of feeling passive reproducers of rules and regulations, decided that it was time for a curriculum change. As part of this initiative they met regularly to share experiences and ideas. Meetings, lessons and informal conversations were regularly recorded, and his student teachers would regularly send him their reflection on their personal experiences in the classroom. When Wu left China to do his PhD in the UK he did not know he was going to end up using that experience for his doctoral study. He decided he would explore teachers' knowledge in the context of the curriculum change they decided to undertake. He knew that it was the teachers themselves who had the answers to the issues they were facing in their daily lives in and outside of the classroom, and Exploratory Practice seemed to be what they had been doing throughout the experience. The group consisted of eleven teachers and authorities and one hundred and twenty student teachers. They explored their own practices through discussions, which led them to agree on implementing certain pedagogical and materials changes, in a natural and simple way, without any research structural impositions, as the Exploratory Practice framework suggests.

Wu (*ibid.*) presents his own experience of the curriculum change via narrative enquiry. More specifically, he aims to represent his own account of the teachers' knowledge. Via narrative enquiry, he presents an account of the teachers' views – again, paying careful attention to what they said happened and not what he now interprets could have happened based on what they said. He also presents a case report on a teacher-initiated, institution-based curriculum change. He explores how the curriculum change takes place in relation to teachers' understanding via Ethnographic and Activity-System Analysis. In chapter 5, in order to find out how what teachers know reflect in the curriculum practice, he uses Critical Discourse Analysis and Systemic Functional Grammar. He explores what sort of talk could nourish teachers' understanding via Critical Discourse Analysis, and how the data/texts could be analysed as networked activities through Activity-System Analysis. Wu's choice of a discourse analysis approach was triggered by a realization that teachers' knowledge was pervasively influenced by the social and political context

rather than by their cognitive accomplishments; and his analysis of teachers' knowledge as an activity system derives from an understanding that teachers' influence in class surely is connected to their lives outside of the classroom. Thus the sequence of the teachers' life activities forms a system that can be taken to show teachers' knowledge more overtly or realistically. Finally, he deploys Argumentation in order to respond to the question of what possible approach there is for teacher development.

His study is very much informed by critical realism (Bhaskar, 1978, 1979, 1986, 1989, 2000 in Wu, 2002), which is concerned with the interface between the natural and the social worlds. In general terms, Wu seems to parallel this with the interface human beings find themselves in, namely, between nature and reason. He sees that education in China and probably around the world focuses too much on reason and too little on nature. In order to regain the balance between them, he suggests it is important to give space to people's primordial understanding, which lies in the nameless, the aesthetic and the authentic. EP seems to provide an adequate framework for that development to happen. Wu (op. cit.) argues that personal and collective accounts of experience are sources of 'knowing'. He speaks of 'knowing', the Chinese counterpart of 'knowledge', to refer to the process, the Tao or way and the journey as opposed to 'knowledge', a Western word that denotes a product, an end or an aim.

Dawson's (2012, 2016) MA dissertation is an exploration into 'how EP can contribute to on-going professional development and one's personal "sense of plausibility"' (Prabhu, 1990 in Dawson, 2012), a developing understanding of how 'learning takes place and how teaching causes or supports that' (Prabhu, 1990:174 in Dawson, 2016). She structured her dissertation in three main chapters: in the first one she tells her own story of how she moved from using Action Research to using EP in her own classroom as a way of professional development. In chapter 2 the literature on EP from its conception until the present time is narrated. Finally, in chapter 3 she presents in a narrative style what other EP practitioners say about the role of EP in their professional development. The data in this study consists of six one-off reflections by EP practitioners in response to the question, 'Why are you interested in Exploratory Practice?' via email. She proceeded with the analysis of the data by identifying first, what drew these practitioners to EP, and second, references

in their accounts to the principles that guide Exploratory Practice, which she summarized under four headings: sustainability (Principles 6 and 7); quality of life (Principle 1); understanding (Principle 2) and learner involvement (Principles 3-5). These principles provided an adequate basic coding system for her.

In Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, where what was then theorized as EP was born, EP continues under development. Under the supervision of Miller, PhD students are using the EP framework as part of their doctoral research. For example, Xavier Ewald discusses the difficulties of writing a PhD about EP. In order to respond to her puzzle she asks other teachers who are involved in doing EP what EP means for them. Among the difficulties she mentions dealing with the relationship between personal and professional life, and with multiple-identity construction in relation to other practitioners; defining 'lived experiences' in the classroom and other contexts; and defining concepts. Another example is Mendes Lima Moura's, who reports on an on-going collaborative practitioner research project involving herself, a professor, students and a teacher. Following the EP framework, they all investigate the difference between common-sense and academic knowledge; and why research projects are written in a format that may not guarantee a sound methodological process. As a preliminary conclusion, they suggest structuring a research project following a why-question format that seems more appropriate to represent the infinite possibilities that the process of knowledge construction opens up. Another example is that of Apolinario, who used the EP framework in her practice as an educational psychologist. First, she met the teachers of one group of students and together they formulated their puzzle. She later met the students and elicited a similar puzzle. The students expressed their understandings of what was puzzling them as a group in graphics. This cooperative way of working for understanding generated insights into the struggles of life at school (Hanks et.al, 2016; see also Gieve and Miller, 2006).

Practitioner Research reminds teachers and students that knowledge-making is not only reserved for academics; that they also create their own knowledge and that classrooms could be places where knowledge is conceived of as a process in the hands of those involved in teaching and learning.

The above-mentioned studies have served as examples of the primacy of the EP principles in guiding the pedagogic and research enterprise, especially of prioritising

the normal pedagogic practice while researching, and of involving students in investigating their own questions as well.

While the students in this project investigated their own issues and questions, I was investigating my own, namely, criticality development. Because this is a long-term research project, I have not had the opportunity to share findings with them while teaching. Their explorations and work have provided data for this research to be explored after the course. However, while teaching, most classes were recorded and I made comment on this project every now and then.

The characteristics above resonate more with EP than with AR. When doing action research there is an issue or question the researcher wishes to explore. She or he devises a research plan, implements it, reflects on the insights gained, evaluates it and implements the new insights gained in a new exploratory cycle. Conversely, my own project consists of identifying a research focus, exploring it and reflecting on it as I teach. Only after all the teaching experiences had ended, did I start analysing the data in response to more refined research questions. The knowledge gained will be used in the future and implemented in my future practice without seeking for something specific such as change. The new insights will hopefully help me be more attentive to human aspects I have been less attentive to. In this sense my study resonates with Wu's (2002; 2005) which retrospectively seeks to understand what was done spontaneously in an educative setting. Perhaps my study has some features of both EP and AR because even though I focused on teaching and learning, trying at all times not to impose a research agenda, in the EP fashion, I also incorporated an extra research tool to obtain students' views on their learning experience, namely, their art-works. Also my reading of the literatures on criticality influenced my practice and as a result I implemented changes, based on my research agenda. This resonates with AR.

### **3.5.3 Exploratory Practice and Criticality**

Here I will present an initial reflection on synergies between previous studies on EP, and criticality, which can serve as a good basis before exploring these links in the three contexts of this study. McPeck's (1981) view of critical thinking relates to Allwright's (2003) Exploratory Practice framework for pedagogy and research in various ways. In order to elucidate these connections and to find out where the

differences and similarities lie, I will attempt to explore the EP principles in the light of McPeck's concept of critical thinking.

The latter argument opens up a discussion on related questions. Even though it is sensible for McPeck to say that in order to advance common criticism, field-specific information is needed, it can also be argued that at least in foreign language learning, whether modules/ courses are subject-oriented or not, topics very often are not discussed deeply and students' opinions and partial understandings have been perhaps inadvertently neglected. In response to this problematic situation and recognising the importance of involving students in researching what is relevant for them, Allwright (1993) argues that teachers and students alike could get involved in doing research in areas of human endeavour that are relevant for them jointly, collaboratively and continuously. Entwined in Allwright's argument there is a recognition of the importance of advancing understanding of specific topics via research, that is by exploring the reasons why things are the way they are, like in McPeck. In Allwright's framework which is referred to as 'Exploratory Practice' there is an emphasis on exploring why-questions, the reason for this being that the aim of the research should be to find the reasons that lie behind facts and voices of authority. However, this aim has been hard to put into practice by practitioners and has created confusion among practitioners (Discussion in EP events across the UK, 2011-2014). The question of why the emphasis has been placed on why-questions rather than on what- or how- questions instead is a common place in discussions on EP (ibid.). The answer to it however has not been exhaustive yet and continues to create confusion especially when EP is implemented (ibid.). In a previous practitioner research project (Salvi, 2012; see also Salvi, 2017), I puzzled over whether it was worth it for my students to explore what- and how- questions as part of their research. Besides, another puzzle for me was whether it was worth for students to investigate mundane, every-day questions. McPeck's understanding of 'critical thinking' helps to justify EP's emphasis on exploring why-questions more clearly. However, one weakness in McPeck's work is his not having shown how his understanding of the concept is realised in practice, in other words, it lacks empirical examples. Still both seem to favour the work for reflective scepticism. EP is not particularly emphatic about the need for subject-specific knowledge and information as McPeck's understanding of critical thinking is. EP seems to aim at getting

students involved in exploring puzzles, that is why-questions, about any aspect of their own learning lives, that is, syllabus or non-syllabus content, in order to understand them better. In order to do this, students must look for answers using their common knowledge as well as knowledge by other authorial voices. EP is not explicit about whether teachers should ensure that students approach the information they collect with reflective scepticism. Examples of EP show that students do the work and share their partial findings at different stages, which are opportunities to further refine their own understanding of the information collected. However, EP is not explicit about how to do this, that is, about how to check or whether we should check if the information they have collected is trustworthy, has been understood, and questioned, etc. It is believed though that when students are researching topics that are relevant for them, are given space to have a voice, and are not judged based on their partial understandings of the topic they are investigating, the results could be so positive and empowering that the question of whether the puzzle has been exhaustively researched or not may not be a priority.

Having said this, in my own EP experience (*ibid.*) prior to this study, I was puzzled by questions such as when understanding could be said to be sufficient, whether common knowledge constitutes sufficient understanding of an issue, how to deal as a teacher with students' management, comprehension and critical thinking, of the information collected.

So far, it seems that EP could be said to exemplify McPeck's understanding of the concept of critical thinking, that is, practitioners' disposition and skill to engage in reflective scepticism. Regarding testing whether a student or practitioner has been a critical thinker, McPeck suggests that writing an essay could be an appropriate way of doing it. EP's focus is not on critical thinking, that is why, there is no specificities about testing or checking for critical thinking more rigorously. However, considering this concept more closely within EP could help practitioners be more serious and clear about it.

EP has been implemented in EAP successfully (see Hanks, 2015a, 2015b, 2017a; Salvi, 2017), but it still can be overwhelming for some practitioners within this field. It involves flexibility, thinking on the spot, and creatively making the students' questions fit the syllabus. The EP principles seem to promote criticality, which is one of the aims of the Western university. This doctoral study aims at exploring to what

extent and how EP promotes criticality and what aspects of criticality EP does not focus on, in the hope that a more comprehensive understanding of criticality can be gained and a more educational approach to EAP can be designed.

The first EP principle that refers to focusing on quality of life very much resonates with the meaning of criticality within critical theory concerned with identity, the development of the subject and being. In short, critical theory provides a framework for understanding human suffering by providing tools to critique the practices that oppress human beings (Herzog, 2016). Trying to understand what causes human suffering is at the heart of critical theory and, it seems, of EP too. In EP learners are encouraged to explore what puzzles them, which very often is associated with pain. For example, the following students' puzzles seem to stem from a desire to understand their own pain: 'Why is it so hard to come up with a question for our research project?' and 'Why are we here?' (Salvi, 2012 and 2017), or 'Why are there so many teenage pregnancies despite there being preventive campaigns?' (Allwright & Hanks, 2009). While critical theory tries to uncover the implicit societal rules and practices that generate human oppression, EP, while offering practitioners the possibility of exploring such questions, is also open to accepting enquiries which stem from a person's curiosity, a desire to understand the way things are more deeply, which might not be related to suffering. An example of such question is: 'Why is the Chinese Mooncake Festival so popular in East Asia?' (Salvi, 2012; Salvi, 2017). Besides, going back to the aforementioned EP questions that seem to stem from pain, EP also welcomes responses that are not necessarily social critiques. Perhaps the most substantial difference between EP and critical theory is that EP is an educative framework that brings teachers and learners together into exploring their own puzzles while critical theory is a tool usually used by the critical theorist for understanding and uncovering the social forces that oppress human beings and cause their suffering. However, Grey (2009) within the field of EAP in the Australian context adopts a poststructuralist perspective on her practice. Poststructuralism can be considered a phase in the development of critical theory. Grey (ibid.) designs an EAP curriculum taking into account some of the central ideas within this tradition, namely, heterogeneity, difference, identity and subject construction. She involves her students in working and reflecting on topics related to the development of their own identities, to the role difference and heterogeneity play

in their lives, and so on. She aims to raise awareness among her students that they are in a constant process of becoming while performing certain values, practices, and ideas. We usually act in ways that conform to societal implicit rules of behaviour. Whatever is different from the norm might be rejected. However, by drawing her students' attention to and involving them in working on the topics of difference and heterogeneity, she is exposing both the societal implicit rules of behaviour and at the same time the infinite possibilities of being, behaving and knowing which lie outside of conventions or normativity. Even though Grey does not refer to suffering directly, one could say that being rejected for being, knowing and behaving differently from what is acceptable in a given society causes suffering. Understanding where that suffering comes from is empowering both for those who suffer and for those who have inflicted suffering perhaps unintentionally. Grey's is an example of how critical theory can be applied to the EAP classroom practice. Perhaps the most salient difference between EP and critical theory is that while the former prioritises the exploration of puzzles, the latter focuses on understanding that human suffering usually stems from oppressive implicit rules of behaviour. While the former is broader in scope, the latter focuses on uncovering injustice. Perhaps critical theory can be a useful tool for EP practitioners especially when the exploration of certain puzzles remains at a shallow level.

#### **3.5.4 How Exploratory Practice was adopted for this study**

Exploratory Practice informed the teaching, learning and research in the consecutive phases of this project. First and foremost, my focus was on the students' questions and on providing them with opportunities to reflect on their learning, to think of and explore what they needed to learn specifically in relation to the syllabus content as well as what they were curious about, their epistemic questions, in the classroom. The seven EP principles were closely attended to in what happened in the classroom the teaching, learning and students' research.

When it came to my own research questions for doctoral study, I collected data from the consecutive educative experiences that I analysed for signs of criticality after they had finished. EP happens in the classroom, involving everyone. However, the investigation of criticality mostly happened at the end of the teaching and involved

the teacher researcher. Even though I informed my students that I was trying to develop criticality, they were not involved in exploring criticality. Neither was I as I was too busy doing criticality. Its analysis would happen after the educative experiences had finished.

EP was not fully followed. Principle 6 stipulates that the work for understanding should be integrated into normal pedagogic practice in order to prevent both burnout and imposing an extra burden on the participants (Allwright, 2003: 128-130). I attended to this principle by keeping records of what we did in the classroom as part of the normal pedagogic practice, which I used after the programmes to understand and identify signs of criticality. In other words, I used the classroom records to understand my puzzle after the programmes had finished. At the same time, while teaching I tried to understand criticality by attending to aspects of the practice that I considered to constitute signs of criticality more attentively. In this sense it is how my understanding criticality was integrated into the normal pedagogic practice. However, students were minimally involved in understanding my own puzzle and the work I did after the teaching experiences was mainly for my individual understanding. If the work had involved the students more fully, understanding of signs of criticality in our practice would have been mutual, attending to EP Principle 5, working for mutual understanding.

Another way of attending to this Principle would have been to use Potentially Exploitable Pedagogic Activities (PEPAS) to understand and identify signs of criticality as I was teaching, rather than after all the teaching had finished. This would have involved the students in understanding criticality too. This perhaps is the more conventional and expected interpretation of this principle. However, my intention was to explore what I was already doing in my practice, which was characterised by a focus on the students' explorations. Even though it would have been as interesting to share and explore my own teacher-researcher puzzle with my students, my focus at the time was on going on with my practice characterised by EP and autonomy, and on collecting records to subsequently look back and identify and try to understand signs of criticality on each consecutive teaching phase.

The way I carried out my exploration into signs of criticality in my teaching practice might not be as sustainable as if I had done the work for understanding in the classroom with the students while teaching. EP's Principle 7, making the work a

continuous enterprise, was attended to in the classroom but less so in the work on criticality that I did after the teaching phases had finished. Such work is less sustainable as practitioner research since it demands considerable time outside of the pedagogical experience in the classroom.

All in all, EP was deployed in the teaching, learning and research that happened in the classroom, and less so in the exploration into criticality, which I, the practitioner researcher, continued after the educative experiences had finished.

### **3.6 Arts-enriched research methods**

This study deploys arts-enriched research methods (HEA, 2014). Below is a justification for using these methods in dialogue with the literature on the arts in qualitative research (Knowles and Cole, 2008).

In the first year of this doctoral research I attended two workshops on the link of art and knowledge organised by the Higher Education Academy in the UK, which gave me confidence that combining art and research is plausible, and marked the beginning of my exploration into arts-enriched research methods. The first one was entitled ‘Surprising Spaces: arts-enriched reflection in professional development for academics teaching in the arts and humanities’ (2014) and the second one, ‘Interdisciplinary Drawing Masterclass: collaborative exchange in art and science’ (2014). In the first one we were invited to reflect on practice first via exposition and discussion of poetry and then via producing creative crafts. There was an artist who introduced the different kinds of materials that we could use before we were given the task. The second workshop was more radical. It was held in the School of Art at the University of Ulster in Belfast. The organisers were art lecturers and their art students. The aim of the workshop was to reflect on how to bridge the gap between arts and science. An eye doctor was invited to give a talk about the dry eye disease and after the talk we were all invited to form two teams to discuss how to express our understanding of this disease through art. The art student in our group elicited and wrote our ideas on a flipchart paper to stimulate our imagination before working. The group discussion was focused more on what material to use to represent dryness rather than on whether to draw the eye or how people feel about it, or whether to use abstract art. In my group we discussed using the layers of an onion, using torn fabric,

specific colours, and so on. An embroidery artist was specially invited to teach us how to incorporate embroidery in our work. Talking with people from other disciplines as well as talking about fabric, colours and materials was a new experience to me, and gave me confidence that exploring arts-enriched methods in my academic English language practitioner-research project could be valuable for the participants involved.

Preoccupied with a realization that language sometimes is not sufficient to express experiences and can even obscure and distort those experiences, this study will deploy mostly though not exclusively art as a methodological tool (Back & Puwar, 2012), arts-enriched methods (HEA, 2014). These methods seem to fit the exploratory, democratic and critical nature of this project well, and will allow the teacher-researcher to gain students' insights into the learning experience, and the learner participants to develop their criticality. Given that the participants are all international students, with their own idiosyncratic ways of communicating meaning, providing them with varied ways, including art, of expressing themselves seems appropriate. Drawing and making posters could serve as a means to express the nameless, authentic and aesthetic referred to by Wu (2002; 2005).

Arts-enriched research methods (Eisner, 1981, 1998, 2001, 2008; HEA, 2014), specifically, drawings, have been deployed in an attempt to 'capture the ineffable and hard-to-put-into-words' (Weber, 2008), to 'inspire creative thought' (McNiff, 2008: 32), to 'challenge [...] the dominant, entrenched academic community and its claims to scientific ways of knowing' (Finley, 2008: 72), and 'to go beyond a verbal mode of thinking, [which] may help include wider dimensions of experience, which one would perhaps neglect otherwise' (Bagnoli, 2009: 565), among others (Salvi et al., 2016).

Informed by a pedagogy for autonomy and exploratory practice, I encouraged students to create posters to express what they were learning, and to materialise their thought, ideas and insights gained from exploring topics. I could perceive the potential of putting insights, results, and partial understanding into paper and at the same time I was puzzled by it. In other words, I wondered how creating posters contributed to the students' meaning making and learning processes.

Both approaches suggest that posters could be used in the classroom for different purposes (for a list of purposes within EP see Wu, 2002; 2005), some of which include sharing either a plan of work, or the work done and the insights gained from the exploration of a topic, or what needs to be further explored or finalised, with the rest of the class and the lecturer (Dam, 1995). It seemed to me that the posters that the students created in class were often artistic including pictures, colours and drawings. Within EP, both Wu (2002; 2005) and Hanks (2013) have already stressed the need for further research on the functions and content of students' posters. In my experience of encouraging students to create posters with the purpose of showing and sharing their plans, insights and questions, I had noticed that in the process of making their posters and formalising their thoughts and insights students seemed to exercise and develop skills that seemed resonant with being critical or with characteristics of a critical education. For example, students think and decide what to include in the poster, reflect on what they have learned and how best to represent it, in other words, articulate the thoughts and insights gained from exploring topics. This is also usually done collaboratively, which means that they talk about their work, share understanding and make meaning (Chun, 2015), all of which seem to be actions that involve being critical.

This representation or formalisation of thought (Langan, 1966) is usually both verbal and non-verbal depending on the time available in class. It is usually the case that with courses with many hours of teaching per week there is more space for creativity and non-verbal representations; on the other hand, with two-hour-per-week modules, the use of posters and artful ways of representation is more limited altogether.

Another reason why I became interested in arts-enriched methods was that I perceived that there was a link between art or creativity and 'criticality' (Johnston et al., 2011), in other words, that art could be a medium for participants to be critical. Thirdly, my assumption was that perhaps through a non-verbal form of communication participants could express different insights from those expressed via verbal communication (Bagnoli, 2009).

Regarding the first motivation to use arts-enriched methods in this project, that is, the fact that I was already using posters in the classroom, plus the need for research on posters, I decided that I would ask participants to reflect on their learning experience through drawing and painting once, twice or three times in the course

according to the affordances of each provision. This decision was made to ensure that participants' views on the experience are collected and that this method is used systematically in all cases. Also, some of the posters that the students normally create in the classroom to share a plan of work or the work done and the insights gained from exploring topics will be collected and analysed.

In this project, students' posters and paintings have been deployed for pedagogic and research purposes. Posters have been used at all times either to brainstorm ideas, to plan work, or to show and share understanding. However, drawing and painting have been used in exceptional moments and have been introduced as a novelty to give students an opportunity to reflect on their learning and research experience in a different way that appeals to the senses, to 'intuition' (Knowles & Cole, 2008:61), and to other ways of knowing that can contribute to student development of criticality. Analysing the students' drawings will shed light onto what aspects of student criticality are fostered via this means of art.

An early proponent of arts-based research was Elliot Eisner in the 1980s in the US (Leavy, 2009). Currently, more than thirty years on, this idea is starting to take on in the social sciences in general as well as in Applied Linguistics in particular, both in the UK and around the world. In the UK in 2014, for example, the 6th ESRC Research Methods Festival, and the ESRC Interdisciplinary Conference and Interactive Workshop on Inequality in Education and Innovation in Methods included artful and innovative research methods.

In a book chapter entitled 'Art and knowledge' Eisner (2008) addresses the question of whether the arts enlarge human understanding. He starts his argument by saying that western philosophy has largely been influenced by Plato's theory of knowledge that regards 'the sensory systems that were stimulated through the arts' as misleading. In other words, the separation between science and the arts dates back to Plato's ideas of knowledge and science (ibid: 4). Eisner argues that it is with Aristotle that there is recognition of the arts as a source of knowing. Aristotle distinguishes three kinds of knowledge: theoretical, practical and productive, the last of which refers to the arts. In a similar light to Back and Puwar (2012), Eisner introduces the edited book *Handbook of the Arts in Qualitative Research* (Knowles and Cole, 2008) as 'an encomium to the use of new forms of representation in the service of improved understanding of the human condition'. When it comes to

language, he makes a distinction between descriptive and evocative language, and says that ‘art in research puts a premium on evocation, even when it has sections or aspects of it that are descriptive in character’. Eisner argues that in order to influence this philosophical move significantly it is important that researchers from the social sciences work in teams with practitioners of the arts (ibid: 9).

The power of images lies in its ever-lasting potential to evoke memories and for meaning making. What makes arts-informed methods so powerful is their direct accessibility and their being a source of meaning making, creativity, criticality, resonance and imagination. Artful research tools (Back and Puwar, 2012) facilitate accessing thoughts and memories that are either hard to articulate (Knowles and Cole, 2008: 44) or in one’s subconscious, working for mutual development, and expanding opportunities for knowledge production to key actors in the educative enterprise.

### **3.7 Live Methods**

At the same time this project has been informed by ‘live methods’ (Back and Puwar, 2012) which were born within sociology as a reaction to more traditional research methods which were restrictive to capture the spontaneity and creativity of the sociological imagination. Live methods consist of more creative and artful ways of doing research. Back and Puwar (ibid.) report on research done via live methods by which a group of researchers discuss what they want to research and decide on the best way to do it before going to the streets to carry out their research. Some of these tools include taking photographs, recording sounds, writing poetry to express smells and emotions that cannot be captured via other more conventional tools. After the work is done, they reconvene to share experiences and plan their work ahead. This way of doing research is spontaneous and creative, which resonates with the principles of exploratory practice and with arts-enriched methods. In exploratory practice, students have to decide what they want to explore and how they wish to do it, carry out their explorations and report what they have found using class time. Following this format allows the teacher researcher and the participants to do research while engaging in normal pedagogic practice. As it is stated in the seventh principle of exploratory practice, doing research as part of the normal pedagogic

practice is a way of preventing burnout and minimising the research burden. Likewise based on the context of situation I spontaneously use certain research tools at hand to capture meaningful episodes both inside and outside the classroom. Live methods are also resonant with arts-enriched methods since both constitute artful and creative approaches to doing research.

What Back and other researchers are currently doing in the UK and around the world resonates with this study in navigating boundaries. In a similar light, this research plan is open to accommodate itself to the circumstances, to what is affordable and comes spontaneously. It is in the classroom that the students and myself many times decide what research tools to use and when to do it. For example, in the second cycle, a group of students, who were researching British attitudes to homosexuality, told me that they would like to access expert information on the subject. In response, I suggested that they could contact researchers in the Sociology Department. During class time I sat down by them and together we looked for the sociology Department website. They immediately identified a researcher they would like to contact, and I suggested that they should go to the Department to enquire whether they could meet that specialist. After making sure they knew what to say and how to say it, I allowed them to do this. After some time they returned to the class with the news that they had managed to interview and video recorded the specialist. Eventually, they used that data to present their work to the rest of the class, which was a success. This is one example of live methods being used in the classroom. Another example is voice-recorded spontaneous conversations I have had about my research with fellow researchers or colleagues. The first time was in China when an ELT teacher I had been introduced to and myself were at a restaurant. We were conversing quite deeply about issues that had arisen in the course of my research when I asked her if she did not mind if I recorded our conversation for my study, and she agreed. The second time was when I Skype-interviewed a colleague on a topic my students showed interest in knowing more about and I brought that recording to the class. After the class, I met my colleague by chance again. I told her how well the students had taken the idea and spontaneously suggested if she wanted to come to the class to discuss the topic further. She agreed and the following day when she came to the class I voice-recorded the whole discussion. After the class, I went for a coffee with her and that night I voice-recorded my impressions of the whole experience. These seem to

me instances of using live research methods.

### **3.8 Ethicality of the project**

In order to comply with ethical regulations I informed the two higher education institutions I was working at of my intentions to conduct practitioner research in my classes. The first and third phases of this study were conducted at one of the institutions, for which I completed a research ethics form online. The second phase of this project was conducted at the institution where at the same time I was studying for this doctoral degree. As a student, I completed an Application for Ethical Approval form (Appendix 1), and as a lecturer I informed the programme managers of this too. In the classroom, I informed my students of the project by providing them with both a participant information sheet (Appendix 3) and a consent form (Appendices 1 and 2). It is worth saying that based on my Phase Two students' feedback on the participants' consent forms, I simplified and bettered them for Phase Three. The initial consent form can be seen in Appendix 1 and the modified consent form can be seen in Appendix 2. The improved version more clearly and concisely signals the types of data to be collected (i.e. transcriptions of audio and video records of student discussions and presentations, student posters and drawings, and student written work) and puts together three purposes why the researcher will use participants' contributions (i.e. in this doctoral dissertation, in academic publications and conferences). Conversely, the initial consent form asks participants to consider each possible purpose why the author will use each data type separately, which makes the form completion more complex and time consuming, and the researcher's use of the data more challenging and restrictive.

With participants from phases 1 and 2, all of whom are from China, I kept in touch after this experience mainly via text messages on WeChat, a Chinese messaging and social media app that they are used to using. If any doubts or questions about their consent forms arose after the experience, I contacted them via this means. With students from phase three, who are from different national contexts, I kept in touch via email.

### **3.9 Timeline of data collection and analysis**

Before focusing on the data studied for the purpose of this doctoral dissertation, I must remind the reader that each of the language and/or teacher development programmes that I taught while conducting this research happened one after the other with insufficient time between them for me to look back at the data or to analyse it before starting teaching a new ‘occurrence’ or ‘phase’. The analysis happened much later, after I had finished teaching the six occurrences within three different programmes in total. The first and fifth were occurrences of the same pre-sessional course in China, one in 2014 and the other in 2015; the third, fourth and sixth were three occurrences of the same academic English essay writing module, one in the first term of 2014-2015, another one in the second term of the same academic year, and the last one in the first term of 2015-2016; and the second was a language and pre-service teacher development programme. Given the large quantity of data I had collected, I found myself obliged to work on fewer phases and I decided that three would be manageable. The next issue was which three phases to choose. The options were: three occurrences of the same programme (3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>); or the first teaching phase, one in the middle and the last one; or the first three consecutive courses which were all instances of different programmes; or the last three phases, two of which were occurrences of the same programme. My decision was to choose the first three consecutive phases because they were all different and in succession, which could reveal the subtleties of the gradual progression of my understanding and developing criticality in the classroom in the first half of the data collected for this project.

Features of pedagogy for autonomy, the principles of exploratory practice and arts-informed and live research methods all informed each consecutive phase in this project. However, my investigating criticality in my practice was not done in the conventional practitioner research mode. In conventional practitioner research, the expectation is that the practitioner-researcher would analyse the data and share partial understandings as they move along the teaching and research process. In my project I mainly focused on pedagogy and the students, rather than on my research agenda; that is, on providing them with space to investigate their questions and develop as reflective practitioners of learning (Allwright and Hanks, 2009) and on developing criticality, and gathering the data that would shed light on my puzzle after the teaching had finished and I had started analysing it. I did share my puzzle

with my students but I thought involving them in investigating or contributing to my puzzle more directly would interfere with their own learning agendas.

Reflecting the reality of most teachers around the world, who have little time to engage in doing research, I decided to collect the data that was generated as part of the normal pedagogic practice as I was teaching. Only after all the data had been collected for one year and a half did I start the analysis of the first three occurrences, one at a time. Since this practitioner research project is part of a doctoral study, I had the extra time that practitioners do not normally get otherwise to stop teaching and analyse the data in search of answers to my research questions.

### **3.10 How the teaching experience of each Phase impacted on the next Phase**

The First Phase was a pre-sessional course in China. My being in China influenced the way I was thinking of and trying to understand criticality in that context. I was curious to learn about the role of people in politics, whether there is citizenry participation in politics, and how it translates into the educative domain, that is, in the classroom; and whether students voiced their political views in the classroom despite China being a communist country. I was interested in promoting a pedagogy characterised by dialogue, providing opportunities for thinking, choosing, developing their voices and being active. At the same time, our inter-cultural and inter-societal encounter played an important role in the learning experience and in my understanding of criticality. In other words, the inter-cultural and inter-societal characteristics of this educative classroom experience became part and parcel of what constituted criticality in this context.

This First Phase experience impacted on the Second Phase, a language and teacher development course for visiting Chinese students at a HE institution in the UK. The strong injection of cultural and societal curiosity that I had felt in China was now my Chinese students' in the UK. Most of the questions the students posed and investigated were about the new cultural and societal British context: about the customs, attitudes, and perceptions of people living in the UK. That is, thanks to the First Phase, in the Second Phase I welcomed the students' questions about the new culture and society more easily, even suggesting that they should explore those

questions as part of the British culture component of the programme. Secondly, in this Second Phase I suggested that my students should explore some of the questions I was curious about in Phase One: the role of democracy, dialogue and participation in China, more specifically, in politics and in education, and within education, in pedagogy and research, which were relevant to the programme, whose focus was on English language skills, culture and teacher development (these students were all doing undergraduate teaching training courses back home). While in Phase One my students and I informally talked about these topics; in Phase Two I gave my students class time to explore these questions by themselves.

The Third Phase was an academic essay writing module for international students at a university in the UK. Given the multicultural population of this cohort and its more specific focus on essay writing, the students' curiosity about the new culture was not as prominent in this module. Their curiosity was more focused on learning the skills of writing an academic essay. Since all students in this module were from different disciplines I could suggest writing a practice essay about any general topic. Making the best of this opportunity, I suggested similar topics to the ones I had suggested in the previous phase, that is, student and teacher participation in the university curriculum and the relationship between the university and the industry, in other words, current issues related to student life such as the marketization of the university and academic freedom. In other words, involving students in discussions of their role and the teacher's role at university was intended to make students think about their place in society, the meaning behind the status quo, the way the world and knowledge is constructed and their role in that construction, because at the time I thought that these considerations by students constituted criticality. Like in the previous phase I proposed topics that I thought would contribute to criticality development and that were related to my own understanding of criticality.

At the same time, in all the three phases, I promoted dialogue, decision-making, questioning assumptions, and developing one's own voice, among others, which were characteristics of pedagogy for autonomy, exploratory practice and arts-informed live research methods.

### 3.11 Data collection

This section will present the data I gathered and subsequently analysed from the first three out of six programmes I taught in the course of 18 months. In other words, this section will present only the data that was actually analysed even though the data I collected was much larger. Table 2 below shows this data schematically.

In the three teaching cycles the following materials have been collected and subsequently analysed: my own diary notes (23 entries in total), students' reflective writing (206 emails and my own notes on their oral reflections), their reflections via drawing or painting (68 in total), voice or video recorded students' talk while working, discussing and presenting work in class (17), and students' posters of work done in class (38 in total). Apart from the arts-enriched reflections, the other data was produced as part of the normal pedagogic practice. The painted reflections were an extra requirement for the purposes of this research project but at the same time were aimed to provide students with opportunities to express themselves, their views of their learning experience, through art. Other data that I have collected and analysed includes: short interviews during tutorials (8 in cycle one), and conversations with other stakeholders (2, one in cycle one and one in cycle two). This additional data was generated via *live methods* (Back and Puwar, 2012): that is, without being initially planned but rather as a result of the affordances of the context of the situation. Next more details about each type of data used will be given:

Contexts Data sources	PSC Beijing - U1 May-June 2014 (8)	ELT programme UK - U2 July-August 2014 (17+18=35)	Academic Essay Writing module U1- Sep-Dec 2014 (13)
My reflective diary	14 entries (p. 63) -Video-recorded oral reflection (Week 1: 2 days) -Written reflections: Week 1 (3 days), Week 2 (2 days), Week 3 (2 days), Week 4 (4 days). Total: 11 written & 2 oral entries	9 entries; one oral entry (Sophie's visit/ voice); and other notes about that time (p. 109) Note 1: Every day except for the last two: Tue & Fri Note2: On Wed 29 I recorded two entries: 1 oral and 1 written	9 entries p125
Students' reflective writing	emails 1 evaluation of presentation	Week 1: 34 Week 2: 15 Week 3: 21 Total: 70/ 105 (66% - Not all students submitted their reflections every week)	10 per student (13 students=130) 65/130 (50 % - Not all students submitted their reflections every week)
Students' paintings/drawings	-Weekly reflections on learning: Week 1: 8 +2; Week 2: 6; Week 3: 6; Total: 20 + mine and Charly's 2 <sup>nd</sup> =22 -Explaining paintings Weeks 1 & 2 (3 videos)	-Weekly reflection on learning 18 (one group only)	7 out of 13 (only once)
Video and voice-recorded students' group discussions, presentations & talk	-While painting Week 1 (1 video)	Whole-class & individual S-T elicitation of topics they are exploring (3 audios) Students' group presentations & whole-class Q/A session A group's in-progress discussion Invited speaker to discuss education system in Britain Total:10	2
Students' posters of work in class	1	37 +	No posters were collected
Semi-structured interviews	8 audio-recorded interviews in tutorials	There were no tutorials in this cycle	There were no tutorials in this cycle
Out-of-class voice-recorded conversations with other stakeholders	-With Alex (a Chinese teacher)	-a student's interview to a sociologist -Skype Interview to a colleague and her visit as guest speaker to the classroom	There were no out-of-class conversations in this cycle. Table 2 Ta Table 2

### **3.11.1 My diary notes**

I wrote 14 entries in phase one, and 9 entries in both phases two and three (all of which amount to 23 entries). While most of them are written entries, a few of them are voice-recorded. They include my reflections on the meaning of criticality, the way I could promote it, and significant moments in each course. On top of these 23 entries I kept notes of my feelings and thoughts all along the doctoral research process; altogether they amount to 50,000 words.

### **3.11.2 Students' reflective writing**

In the three cycles, students were asked to send me their reflections via email broadly responding to three questions: what have you done or learned this week?, How did you feel and why?, And what do you feel you need to work on next?

Reflecting on one's own learning is an opportunity to re-think what was done and learn again. In this process one is confronted with the possibility of making meaning of one's own experience in a different way. Via reflection participants might become aware of significant aspects of their learning experience, life or themselves. In this reflective process student might raise questions that might have a significant effect in their experience. These reflections will be analysed for signs of criticality.

### **3.11.3 Students' reflective paintings/drawings**

Students were also asked to reflect on their learning experience through art, more specifically via painting or drawing as a response to the possibility that words can be elusive sometimes and therefore a drawing or painting could allow participants to express views, emotions or aspects of their experience which are too difficult or illusive to be expressed in writing. While in cycle one this was done every week, in cycles two and three this was done either in the middle or at the end of the course/module. Regarding asking students to explain their artwork, this was done and video recorded in cycle one. In cycle three some students voice recorded their conversations about their artwork with their classmates in class, some others wrote or video recorded their explanations for homework and submitted them by email. In

cycle two due to time constraints and for fear of imposing a research burden (Allwright and Hanks, 2009) on the students, this phase could not be carried out.

#### **3.11.4 Voice and video-recorded students' group discussions, presentations and talk**

In all cycles, lessons were video recorded. They constitute students' informal presentations of work in class or assignment presentations; parts of discussions in groups while working; and in-class interactions with the lecturer. These videos are important evidence of what happens in the classroom and can help the researcher and the participants recall what happened or complement missing information from other data sources. These videos could potentially be used creatively to produce further understanding. Using digital content is an arts-based research method (Rahn, 2008) as is painting or drawing (Sullivan, 2008). In some cases, students themselves have video-recorded salient moments in their learning experience in class which they have shared with me.

#### **3.11.5 Students' posters of work in class**

In all cycles the posters that students have produced in class to show what has been investigated, to share their understanding as well as to raise questions have been collected. Wu (2005) and Hanks (2013, unpublished PhD thesis) have already argued that analysing students' posters as research tools in practitioner research is an area for further study. Both reflective drawings/ paintings and posters are pedagogical and research tools that engage students' creativity and possibly their criticality too. Both are artistic forms of representation which in this project have been used in class only and therefore they could be said to show initial thoughts and insights which nonetheless could be the basis for further deeper explorations (Langan, 1966). Even as initial formalisations, these forms of representation can have a powerful effect on the mind of its creator since it engages different senses. It is believed that the insights represented via art are more memorable and long lasting than those represented via other forms. It would be insightful to explore in what ways posters have been used in this project and the way they relate to other knowledge produced by the students in the three programmes, that is whether the insights represented via

posters are further used in later dialogues, reflections or coursework, weather posters have an impact on their learning and on their criticality.

### **3.11.6 Semi-structured interviews during tutorials**

In cycle one only, weekly one-to-one tutorials were organised as part of the course. These tutorials provided students with opportunities to reflect on their learning experience orally and me to learn more about my students and help them more closely. During these sessions I encouraged the students to tell me what they had done and learned and how they had felt during the week and to share any concerns or questions. I kept notes of what they said which I did not use in this study in the end.

Out of the three tutorials with each student along the course, I used one session to ask my students my own questions. I voice recorded it and used it in this study. In other words, I conducted semi-structured interviews to the students in which I asked them 5 questions to capture their perceptions of 1) making decisions in the classroom, 2) reflecting on their learning in writing and 3) drawing, 4) the role of the university and 5) the meaning of criticality. Sometimes depending on each conversation, I rephrased the questions in slightly different ways, that is why these interviews were neither free nor completely structured (Mann, 2016). (See Appendix 4).

### **3.11.7 Out-of-class conversations**

In cycle one and two, I spontaneously recorded two conversations with two friend teachers (with their permission) in which we discussed and reflected on issues in the research process. Live methods (Back and Puwar, 2012) have facilitated linking life outside of the classroom with classroom learning. Analysing this data will yield insights into the role live methods and linking what happens in and outside of the classroom play in developing the researcher's and her participants' criticality.

## 3.12 Data analysis

### 3.12.1 Conventional content analysis

In this section I will explain how the data was analysed. First, a ‘conventional content analysis’ (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005 in Mann, 2016) was conducted in each teaching cycle to identify emerging themes without imposing any theoretical concepts. As a result, 5 themes emerged in the first cycle; 9 themes, in the second cycle; and 5 themes, in the third cycle (See Table 3). These themes are developed and exemplified in chapter 4, 5 and 6, respectively. Following Hsieh and Shannon (2005, in Mann, 2016: 210), this would constitute *conventional content analysis* as it derives codes directly from the data instead of imposing categories based on previous readings or theory. Braun and Clarke (2006) and Clarke and Brown’s (2013) six-phase model for thematic analysis (in Mann, 2016: 2012) has informed and guided this analysis. Its six phases consist of: familiarisation with the data; coding, searching for themes; reviewing themes; defining and naming themes; and writing up. Below I present the specificities of the analysis in each phase:

#### 3.12.1.1 Content analysis in Phase One

When I approached the analysis of Phase One, I analysed each data type separately first, for fear that analysing all the data as a whole would be unmanageable, and then I selected the themes in common in the four data types. Only the analysis of the data as a whole will be presented in chapter 4. Below are details of how each data type was first analysed and at the end what themes emerged across all the data types.

*Teacher-researcher reflective diary:* In order to do a content analysis of my diary, first I selected the 13 entries I wrote during the first teaching experience or cycle, and copied them into a new document. Secondly, using the Comment tool within the Review application on Word, I annotated and labelled the text mostly sentence by sentence. Thirdly, in a printed version, as I was reading the labels and notes again, I highlighted those which were similar with the same colour and wrote possible category names for each colour. Fourthly, I copied all the same-colour comments from the electronic version and pasted them together under different categories in a new document. The resulting 15 categories were refined to 9 themes (Richards, 2003; Mann, 2016:211) which are: 1) learner-centred pedagogy; 2) trying to

understand a different societal and cultural context; 3) students' and teacher's contentment with practice; 4) concern not to impose a research burden; 5) focusing on developing criticality: voicing alternatives to mainstream marketised views of the world; 6) dissatisfaction with pre-packaged material; 7) uncertainty about appropriateness of learner-centred pedagogy; 8) improving my practice; and 9) requesting articulated understanding.

*Students' drawings and their talk about them:* During this 4-week course, 3 drawing sessions were organised and 16 drawings have been collected and analysed thematically. Both transcribed students' talk about the drawings, and the words and graphic elements in them were annotated, and 14 themes emerged which were refined and defined into 6 themes (Mann, 2016): 1) identifying and defending one's own societal and cultural habits; 2) resisting and facing resistance; 3) drive to learn; 4) positive evaluation of pedagogy; 5) voicing one's interests and asking one's questions; and 6) developing self-awareness. These will be developed with examples below.

*Semi-structured interviews with students:* Towards the end of the course, precisely at the end of week 3, I decided to use tutorial time to ask each of the 8 students their views of their learning experience in this course for 10 minutes each. I asked them 5 questions regarding their perceptions about 1) making decisions about their learning in class, or to put it in other words, choosing what is best for them; 2) the meaning of criticality, whether they have been critical, and whether they have chosen not to be critical at some point and why; 3) the role of universities; 4) reflecting about their learning, that is whether reflexivity (Mann, 2016) is of any benefit for them; and 5) using art (painting) to express their feelings and thoughts about this learning experience.

Mann (2016) has highlighted the importance of acknowledging the influence the interviewer's talk and questions exert on the data obtained. This is particularly important in this case in question two in which the interviewer changes from asking an open question regarding the meaning of 'criticality' to providing the interviewee with a narrow meaning of this term and asking them whether they have been 'critical' in that particular sense. This reveals the interviewer's uncertainty about the meaning of this term at the outset of her research project and her not knowing how to

deal with the interviewees' not knowing the word, with their thinking time and silence.

Responses to each question were analysed one at a time, all responses to question one first, responses to question two second, and so on. A 'summative thematic analysis' (ibid.) was conducted by which the same responses have been grouped together under the same theme.

All in all, five questions were asked to each of my students during a tutorial session. Responses were thematically analysed and in total 12 themes emerged. These are: 1) Choosing what to learn is useful; 2a) Criticality is sharing our views, ideas and understandings with others; 2b) Being critical is deep and difficult; 2c) Being critical is welcoming all views; 2d) Being critical is dealing with disagreement; 3a) Instrumental views of the university; 3b) Formative views of the university; 4a) Reflecting is being in charge of our own learning; 4b) Reflecting is becoming aware; 4c) Reflecting helps us improve; 5a) Using art is a good way of remembering what was learned; and 5b) Using art is an exciting way of expressing and explaining one's thoughts.

*Student-teacher communication and student written work via email:* The analysis of the students' written work will be important, especially since the main focus in the debate on developing critical thinking in EAP is on examining the students' essays for signs of critical thinking understood as identifying and connecting different voices and developing their own voice by including 'critical thinking' in the assessment criteria. This study aims at not only examining the students' written work but the educative practice as a whole in order to develop a more educational approach to EAP as opposed to an instrumental education. A more educational approach to EAP consists of developing students' criticality more broadly, not only by examining their written final product but especially along their educative experience, by exercising social critique, reflecting on their own development, developing a sceptical attitude towards discourse that is presented as the only truth, sharing, articulating their ideas, views and understandings, working together to develop deeper understandings, as so on. All of these are constitutive aspects of conceptualisations of criticality. It is expected that developing students' criticality more holistically will contribute to a more educational and less instrumental approach to EAP.

By comparing all the themes emerging from each of the data types presented above, six main recurrent themes emerged across all the data sets: (1) Contentment with learner-centred practice; (2) Developing awareness of self; (3) Developing sociological and cultural awareness; (4) Sharing and communicating articulated understanding with others; (5) Drive to learn and become better; and (6) That which is deep and difficult. Each of these themes will be developed with examples in Chapter 4.

### 3.12.1.2 Content Analysis in Phase Two

In the second phase the following five data sets were thematically analysed: 18 student reflections via drawings; 34 (24 small and 10 big) student posters of work done in class; 9 weekly written reflections from 4 students on their learning via email; 14 pages of the teacher/ researcher diary and one extra page of a transcribed voice-recorded entry; and 19 pages of notes from listening to 7 video-recorded records of different lessons of a total of 2 hours and 19 minutes. Firstly, each significant piece of text was labelled and categorised using different colours; this was done manually and intuitively, attempting not to impose any pre-conceived ideas. Secondly, these categories and their respective examples were listed in a word file, data type by data type. A different colour was used to differentiate each data type. Thirdly, all the categories/ labels emerging from all the data types were re-categorised into 48 themes in a chart, which in turn became sub-themes of 9 major themes. These are: 1) student-centred pedagogy; 2) culture, the social, habits; 3) articulating and formalising thought; 4) expanding understanding of both the individual and the social being; 5) imaginative thinking and thirst for change; 6) working with others; 7) working with sources; 8) what we already know; and 9) research. Fourthly, all the categories/ examples within each data type, distinguishable for their same colour, were read one at a time and one example of each data type was selected as representing the theme the most accurately. This will be presented in Chapter 5.

### 3.12.1.3 Content analysis in Phase Three

In this phase, three data types were analysed: the students' reflective writing, their reflective drawings, and my own diary. First, notes were made and names were given to each piece of data. Secondly, these notes were numbered and typed in a Word file. This was done with each type of data separately. Thirdly, these notes were organised and grouped into categories or themes. Fourthly, the notes and categories/ themes emerging from the three types of data were compared and further refined by highlighting with different coloured pencils the notes and categories which were similar across all the data types. The first three steps will be subsequently detailed. Regarding the students' reflective written accounts, 142 notes were made which were organised into 23 initial categories which were grouped together into 4 main categories; regarding the students' drawings and their explanation of them, both orally and in writing, 20 notes were organised into 10 initial categories which were further refined into 5 categories; and regarding my teacher-researcher diary, 72 notes were grouped into 7 main categories. In the fourth step, after comparing all the notes and categories emerging from all the data types, five main themes emerged across the data types, which will be developed in Chapter 6.

### **3.12.2 Re-reading the themes in response to the research questions**

After this first analysis was finalized, by comparing the themes across the three teaching cycles, I rearranged them under three main over-arching themes. Table 4 shows the way I rearranged the themes to fit the three overarching themes. First, I grouped: themes 1, 2, 5 and 6 in Phase One; themes 1, 3, 6 and 9 in Phase Two; and themes 2, 3 and 4 in Phase Three under the umbrella term '*Being in charge*'. Second, I grouped: theme 3 from the first cycle; themes 2, 4 and 7, from the second teaching cycle; and theme 5 from the third teaching cycle under the umbrella term '*Sociological and cultural awareness*'. Lastly, I grouped: theme 4 from Phase One; themes 5, 6 and 8 from Phase Two; and theme 1 from Phase Three under the overarching theme '*Collaboration and others*' (Table 4).

This rearrangement of the themes into three general categories provides a broad understanding of the data as a whole. In turn, this broader understanding was intended to facilitate establishing links with criticality. This three-theme structure

and its components provided me with a more focused framework from which to start discussing signs of criticality based on the literature review, in particular, according to CEAP, critical pedagogy, critical thinking and critical theory. First, I focused on the overarching theme '*Being in charge*', and phase by phase, I discussed the themes included under this overarching theme in relation to the theoretical frameworks listed above and reviewed in the literature of this study (Section 7.1.1). Second, I discussed the overarching theme '*Sociological and cultural awareness*' in the same manner (Section 7.1.2). Finally, I discussed the overarching theme '*Collaboration and others*' in the same fashion (section 7.1.3). By doing this, I responded to the first research question, 'what signs of criticality are there in my EAP teaching practice?'

Finally, in order to respond to the second research question, 'to what extent and how can pedagogy for autonomy, exploratory practice and arts-enriched research method contribute to developing criticality?', I discussed the signs of criticality that I had identified in my practice in the light of pedagogy for autonomy, EP and arts-enriched research methods.

In order to facilitate this discussion, I placed all the signs of criticality that I had identified in my practice, using the subheading I used in section 7.1, in a table (Table 5). As shown in Table 5, I changed the names of the overarching themes for names that depict the three aspects of criticality more concisely: individual, socio-cultural, and interpersonal aspects of criticality. First, I discussed to what extent and how the *pedagogy for autonomy* that I deployed in my practice was conducive to criticality development (section 7.2.1). Second, I discussed to what extent *Exploratory Practice* as developed in my practice was conducive to criticality development (section 7.2.2). Finally, I discussed to what extent the use of *arts-enriched research methods* in my practice contributed to criticality development (section 7.2.3).

For each question, first, I focused on each aspect of criticality at a time: individual, socio-cultural, and interpersonal. Second, by looking at all the signs of criticality across the three phases, I highlighted the most salient signs across the three phases and discussed them in the light of the literature on, first pedagogy for autonomy (section 7.2.1), second EP (section 7.2.2), and finally arts-enriched methods (section 7.2.3).

Phase One	Phase Two	Phase Three
<p>Theme 1: Contentment with learner-centred practice</p> <p>Theme 2: Developing awareness of self</p> <p>Theme 3: Developing sociological and cultural awareness</p> <p>Theme 4: Sharing and communicating articulated understanding with others</p> <p>Theme 5: Drive to learn and become better</p> <p>Theme 6: That which is deep and difficult</p>	<p>Theme 1: Embracing a student-centred pedagogy: a new and different way of doing things</p> <p>Theme 2: Homogeneous view of social behaviour: Identifying and developing understanding of implicit social norms in both own and foreign society</p> <p>Theme 3: Engaging participants' experiential, previous, everyday knowledge</p> <p>Theme 4: Resisting aspects of own and foreign classroom practice</p> <p>Theme 5: Positive attitude to articulating and formalising thought</p> <p>Theme 6: Enlarging, expanding understanding of both the self and the other</p> <p>Theme 7: Thirst for personal and social change and improvement</p> <p>Theme 8: Working with others</p> <p>Theme 9: Working with sources</p>	<p>Theme 1: Regarding the other in the process of learning</p> <p>Theme 2: Positive attitude to reflective drawing</p> <p>Theme 3: Identifying own language needs, asking the lecturer for advice and appreciating the lecturer's feedback</p> <p>Theme 4: Positive perception of academic essay writing skills learned</p> <p>Theme 5: Limitations and challenges of the learning and teaching experience</p>

Table 3

## Chapter Four: Phase One: Pre-sessional Course (Beijing)

### 4.1. Description of Practice

#### 4.1.1 An overview of the course

This is the first of the first three consecutive programmes (the last three phases will not be included in this work for reasons of space) in which I was trying to promote and understand criticality via practitioner research. The first one happened in May-June 2014 and was a 4-week pre-sessional course in China for students who were going to continue their studies at one of the universities where I was teaching at the time in the UK. The aim of the course was to introduce them to life in the UK and to develop their academic English skills. It was a 20-hour per week course with two sessions of 90 minutes each in the morning and one 90-minute session every other afternoon mostly devoted to tutorials. The syllabus was designed according to both, topics (the first week was focused on the theme *Changing Society*, the second week on *IT and Social Media*, the third week on *Brands and Advertising*, and the fourth week on *International Business*) and general language skills (speaking, writing, listening and reading). The material offered was a compilation of excerpts taken from different textbooks on academic English and English for the professions, and of some material designed by the pre-sessional leading team in a similar fashion to the textbook excerpts selected for this syllabus. It also included a weekly project aimed at developing students' speaking, writing, argumentative and presentation skills. Lecturers teaching on this course could choose which lessons to do from the list suggested and had to print the material at the host university; she/he could complement it with other material or tasks as well. In other words, the syllabus was framed following a traditional language textbook format.

#### 4.1.2 The actual practice

My actual practice was built up with some of the material provided and with other material and tasks that I chose to meet my own and my students' needs. More specifically, while keeping the topic-based organization including some of the projects and some of the material provided, I also added original sources such as

current newspaper articles, literary book excerpts and academic English language books, and asked the students to bring their own material. I provided them with options of tasks they could do on this or other material for them to choose from according to their academic English language needs. I asked them to reflect about their learning through different mediums, that is, orally, in writing and via drawings. My aim was to encourage criticality, autonomy and the principles of exploratory practice. Below is a description of practice week by week based on what I recorded in my lecturer-researcher's diary.

#### 4.1.2.1 Week 1

The theme of week 1 was 'Changing Society'. By looking at the syllabus one could identify subthemes such as changes in today's cities, climate, in the way people move around the globe and how they cope with living in different societies. I chose three of them: a listening task about factors that contribute to making a good city to live in; devising a survey about cities, especially, the development of Chinese cities; and a discussion about the differences between the British, and the Chinese culture based on info-grams by artists. Coincidentally, the latter is resonant with meanings of criticality, as I understood it at the time, which I had set out to explore while teaching in this programme.

We used the three pieces of material in the syllabus and I developed other tasks around them which I considered were important in helping students develop their academic skills. Also newspaper articles from the local newspaper in English as well as excerpts from literary books I had copies of were added. For example, based on the listening material about factors that contribute to making a good city for living, I asked students not only to discuss what the speakers said but also to engage their own opinions and create a poster in groups evaluating those factors in their views. For homework I also asked students to choose one factor only and individually write an essay about why that factor is important in making it a good city to live in. This would help me identify their academic writing needs to provide better guidance and would be an opportunity for them to think, express their views and exercise their putting ideas in writing. Secondly, based on the material provided, that is, a PowerPoint presentation on art-works on differences between the Chinese and the

British societies, and on a textbook page about differences between the two cultures, including a list of English phrases, their common uses in the British culture and how they might be understood by speakers of other languages, I first asked students to discuss their ideas about whether there are typical characteristics associated with these two cultures in two groups, one society/ culture each group. Subsequently, they would share their group discussions with the other group. After engaging their own previous knowledge about the subject matter, I provided them with excerpts from two literary books, whose authors enquire into these cultures. After they had read these excerpts, discussed them, and presented their understandings, I suggested evaluating their own discussions and presentations all together, by eliciting their own views about their performance. By doing this I was incorporating original and more challenging reading sources; I was spending time in directing their attention to reflecting on their performance and becoming aware of what they had done well and also what they needed to work on; and in doing this I was also developing my autonomy, thinking about the content suggested for this week and how to own it and make sense of it. By the end of this week I was already feeling frustrated with the syllabus, choosing bits and pieces from random textbooks that had been chosen by others in charge of creating materials for this course, and trying to create some kind of meaningful unity. Despite my attempts to do this, I still felt by the end of the week that keeping the topic-based already-made syllabus was not working well with my students and me. I knew the academic functions they needed to work on and I would have rather worked with material we could find according to their and my interests. Textbooks present abridged information and students need to learn to find sources and engage with them in deeper and more meaningful ways in higher education. Lastly, I devoted one session for students to work on the aspects of language they were weak at, as shown in the feedback I had given them on their essay writing. Again I provided them with original sources, online books and online educational websites, where they could find information and exercises about the academic language items they needed to work on, in class. I wanted them to learn to find responses to their language problems and to provide them with a space in class to work on this and discuss it.

#### 4.1.2.2 Week 2

Week two is about IT and Social Media. Like in week 1, in the second week three pieces of the material suggested were used: a listening task about smart-watches; questions and answers about this week's topic for discussion; and a project to complete a survey and write a report on it.

This material was complemented with other material and tasks such as an episode of a popular British comedy show to introduce the students to examples of British humour and to work on pronunciation; the students' own material; and their reflections on their weekly learning via painting and drawing. These extra material and tasks were aimed at making students reflect on what they were learning, and work on their own needs, and the lecturer-researcher use her creativity and expertise to make decisions about her teaching practice. However, despite doing this, I felt that doing bits and pieces of a topic- and textbook-based syllabus was taking my autonomy to make sound decisions about my teaching and the students' full potential away. It is also true that every educational situation has its own constraints, which educators must learn to deal with. In this case these were the constraints I had to deal with and it is worth stressing that despite these constraints I tried to find spaces to develop a more learner-centred, function-oriented and criticality-facilitating educative practice.

#### 4.1.2.3 Week 3

The topic of week 3 was Brands and Advertising. Local newspapers in English and articles from a specialist magazine online were used to work on aspects of academic English that the lecturer considered important. Some of the tasks I suggested included finding a newspaper article that related to week 3's topic and discussing how it related to it; reading two specialist magazine articles to identify textual patterns, the SPRE (Situation-Problem-Response-Evaluation) pattern (Edge & Wharton, 2001, 2002), and to work on paragraphing and the sentence structure; and talking about their reflective drawings from the previous week. From the syllabus I chose this week's project, which consisted of designing and selling a product. Spontaneously, I video-recorded their presentations so that they could evaluate their own performance as homework.

Using local news and current news from specialist magazines was aimed at promoting student engagement with the everyday (Chun, 2015), with the social and the political, and ultimately, with what is going on in the world in connection with the syllabus topics. Once original sources are brought to the classroom, different aspects of academic English language and of reading and writing can be studied in them. If the lecturer has expertise in teaching academic English language, a syllabus can be easily organised by selecting original sources of interest to the students and by working on identifying different aspects of the language, of reading and writing in those texts. Bringing academic English books to the class, asking students to investigate a specific item and explain it to their classmates before identifying them in texts or incorporating them in their own writing, as well as encouraging students to continually reflect on their learning via tutorials, painting or drawing and/ or writing was integral to this educational practice.

#### 4.1.2.4 Week 4

In the fourth week like in the previous ones some of the materials provided were used and new tasks were tailored to the students' academic English needs. Students' work on the last week include: discussing and sharing what they had done for homework regarding vocabulary and writing; checking the lecturer's feedback on their reports and setting up homework based on it; presenting their self-designed products and evaluating their presentations including good aspects and aspects to improve all together; practising speaking by discussing the topic of this week, which is 'business', and considering an alternative, less market-driven society as introduced and sketched by the lecturer (Benesch, 2001); and finally, reading an article, writing a summary of it, reading it aloud and giving and receiving feedback from the lecturer and their classmates in class.

#### 4.1.3 Themes emerging in the lecturer-researcher's diary exclusively

From the description above based on my lecturer-researcher's diary several themes emerged, many of which also appeared in the thematic analysis of the students' perceptions of the learning experience. When the same themes emerged in the analysis of both my own and my students' perceptions of the educational experience,

they will be discussed in the next section about the analysis of all the data. Two themes that emerged in my diary and not in the students' perceptions will be discussed in this section. These are the lecturer's discontent with pre-packaged material, and her concern not to impose a research burden.

#### 4.1.3.1 Lecturer's discontent with pre-packaged material

My own lecturer-researcher diary shows evidence that following a topic-based syllabus was problematic for me. I felt that the activities were disconnected with one another and even though they kept a close relationship to a general theme, they were about different subtopics. What this generated was frustration for me, the lecturer-researcher. In other words, I felt a strong lack of autonomy to make sound decisions about my teaching and that using the material provided prevented me from thinking clearly about what I considered good practice and what these students in particular needed. I expressed this frustration consistently in my diary, as reflected in the two excerpts below:

##### Extract 1

Again today because I used some of the material that has been provided without deeply considering whether it could be of interest to the students, I feel the students have not really enjoyed it. The task involved designing and selling a product. They made a presentation and to add some flavour to it or some of my own ideas I filmed them and I have sent them the recording via email for them to write an evaluation of their own performance. (Comment 180)

Having to use this material not only affected my *autonomy* as a lecturer but it resulted in a more *teacher-centred pedagogy*. At the same time and despite the constraints, I tried to find spaces to use other material such as newspapers and to generate a pedagogy based on students' language needs and to promote student criticality, as expressed in the excerpt below:

##### Extract 2

What I have realised and I have been thinking of is how important it is for me, and perhaps it may be the case for other teachers, to identify the functions students should learn in a course and find topics and materials based on the teacher and the students' interests to cover those functions. This course provides topics mainly and material based on those topics, and some functions within each unit. Following this has definitely not been good for me in the first week. I felt this made lessons teacher-led. I discovered that the only way for me to

create a more learner-centred learning atmosphere, I had to think more freely, without relying on all the material and topics provided. I had to think of what students needed to learn and generate opportunities for them to choose and act more freely by using daily local newspapers, and by thinking on what they needed to improve, based on a writing task I administered on the first week. (Comment 150)

As expressed in the excerpt above, instead of following a weekly topic I wished to focus on functions and use material that is of interest to these students in particular. I also wished to provide students with space and time to ask their own questions about the course, the language and life in the UK for example, and in the process of exploring those questions they would develop their academic language skills and learn the functions of the language.

Despite these constraints, I found ways to develop an educational practice informed by a pedagogy for autonomy (Dam, 1995) and exploratory practice (Allwright and Hanks, 2009) and guided by a desire to promote and understand criticality. This involved asking students to reflect on their educative experience both via email and painting weekly; to think about what they had done the previous day and to communicate it to their classmates at the beginning of each lesson; to verbalise what they are doing and will do while they are working in groups; to be active and work on their own language needs based on my individual feedback; to read authentic material and choose what articles to read and what tasks to do in class.

#### 4.1.3.2 Concern not to impose a research burden

Another theme emerging from an analysis of my diary was my concern not to impose a research burden on the students. Informed by the seventh principle of exploratory practice, which reminds practitioners of minimising the research burden by integrating the work for understanding into normal pedagogic practice (Allwright and Hanks, 2009), I wanted to avoid creating an extra research burden on the students by asking them to do things for my own research purposes. Instead I wanted to prioritise pedagogy and use the students' work, their reflective emails and our conversations in tutorials as data for the research. Because using posters/ creative productions mostly to share classwork was part of the normal pedagogic practice, I thought that asking students to reflect via drawing/ painting would not be too much

of an extra burden. However, I was aware that asking students to do this was not required as part of the course and therefore it concerned me at times as is reflected in my diary:

#### Extract 3

The last half an hour I gave them the option of either doing art to express their final feedback or to play a game we had played before with success called 'telling a story: true or false?'. Even though I knew that for my research it would be good to do the former, I was aware that all the students had given me feedback the previous day in tutorials and it felt a little bit too much to ask them to do this again even though it was in a different medium: through art [...] For me it was important not to force art for my research purposes. I already have their feedback from the previous day. (Comment 240)

#### 4.1.3.3 Focusing on understanding criticality

As I have mentioned before, as I was teaching I was focusing my thoughts on whatever I considered criticality to be. This thinking about criticality appears in my diary consistently. However, since criticality is the focus of this research, I do not regard its appearance in my diary as an emergent theme but rather as an expected focus of reflection.

At the time I suspected that by deploying a pedagogy for autonomy and practitioner research informed by the principles of exploratory practice (which involve working for understanding before thinking of changing anything which might seem non-desirable; working together for both individual and mutual understanding; focusing on quality of life as the main issue; making the work for understanding sustainable; and reducing the research burden by using normal pedagogic practice as research tools) I would be promoting criticality. I suspected that being critical involved participation and a commitment to social equality, democratic values and public services such as the public university. Having this in mind, I tried to promote these values in my teaching practice. More specifically, I encouraged students to make decisions about their own learning; I introduced marginalised or less marketised views of the world as running counter to those represented in the material provided each week (this will be later related to Benesch's work, 2001), and I focused on understanding the new society and culture by observing my students and talking to people outside of the classroom.

I understood criticality to be concerned with cultural and sociological awareness, and difference; democracy, participation, and autonomy; with awareness of the role of the university; with reflective attitudes; with art-related expression; and with students taking charge of their learning and making meaning in their own ways.

However, when it came to asking my students what they understood by criticality during a tutorial, I found myself not knowing how to define it either. When they seemed not to know what I was asking them about, I attempted to paraphrase this term and I realised that I was providing them with a limited definition. Some of the words I used to define this term are: *questioning, not accepting what is presented as the only truth, seeing opposing views, both sides of an argument, disagreeing, being different, and voicing one's opinion*. Perhaps this influenced the responses I received from them. Nonetheless, some participants still managed to voice their own definitions and views, which have been thematically analysed and will be presented under different themes in the next section.

In my diary I consistently write about the scope of my research as I am concerned about it not being narrow and clear enough. I usually list the topics my research is related to. Criticality is what I am trying to understand better and I suspect that it is implicit in my practice and my research design, namely practitioner research and arts-enriched methods, but I am not completely certain about this. I take notes not only about what happens in the classroom but what happens outside. I want to understand the new society and I talk to strangers to learn about it. I suspect that criticality is closely related to the dynamics between one's social habits and being confronted with a different social and cultural habit, and to politics, that is, to matters of equality, a fair society with public services to all, and participation. As a researcher, I have doubts about whether criticality is certainly concerned with all this and how best to study it. There is also evidence in my diary that my focus on understanding criticality influences my practice and how I interpret what happens and what the students say in and outside of the classroom.

## **4.2. Thematic Analysis**

In the next section a thematic analysis of my own diary; of the students' reflections on the course both in writing and via painting, and what they say about their art

works; and of the interviews I conducted with them will be presented. The emergent themes are intended to reveal the characteristics of this teaching and learning practice more in depth from both my own and the students' perspectives. Eventually, these themes will be explored in the light of criticality as explored in the literature. This will deepen understanding of what aspects of criticality appear in my practice and whether they were consciously developed and promoted or unexpectedly identified subsequently as a result of this research process. After all the data collected in this language course was analysed, six main recurrent themes emerged across all the data sets: (1) Contentment with learner-centred practice; (2) Developing awareness of self; (3) Developing sociological and cultural awareness; (4) Sharing and communicating articulated understanding with others; (5) Drive to learn and become better; and (6) That which is deep and difficult. Each of these themes will be developed with examples below.

#### **4.2.1. Theme 1: Contentment with learner-centred practice**

Contentment with learner-centred practice has emerged as a theme in the three types of data: my own lecturer-researcher diary, the students' written reflections via email, and their reflective drawings with transcripts of their talk about them. More specifically, the students' and the lecturer's contentment with a learner-centred practice include the following sub-themes which will be developed with examples below: positive feelings about a learner-centred class, and about a relaxing atmosphere; considering students' needs, interests and aspirations; setting up one's own homework and evaluating one another's work; reflecting is being in charge of one's own learning; and valuing instrumental benefits of an autonomous educational experience.

##### 4.2.1.1 Setting up one's own homework and evaluating each other's work

Firstly, in my own diary, I reflect on my students setting up homework for themselves; evaluating each other's oral presentations; and in tutorials being given space to voice their questions, opinions and concerns about their learning. I also reflect on taking students' suggestion to write more in class on board; on students working on their own grammar mistakes in class based on feedback I had given them

on their writing; their reflecting on their own learning in class; and their being given options regarding materials and tasks.

The quote below refers to students being in charge of their own learning by deciding what to do for homework based on their writing problems, and by giving feedback to one another about their oral presentations:

Extract 4

‘I handed their reports back and they spent some time checking all my comments. They set up homework for tomorrow based on the feedback I had given them.’

‘[Students did] four poster-presentations on the best commercial and everyone evaluated everybody’s performance. I think this is another example of democracy in the classroom, and I am going to ask them how they feel about it.’

4.2.1.2 Positive feelings about a relaxing atmosphere

The students’ contentment sometimes seems to be related to their doing things in class that they had not done before, that are a novelty. In the excerpt below I reflect on two of my students’ reflective logs via email in which they expressed liking the relaxing atmosphere in the classroom and finding it different from what they were used to:

Extract 5

The more mature person sent me an email today and another boy who was quite responsible sent me an email today both of them with their reflections, both of which were positive. The most mature person said that in a way they are not used to that kind of relaxing atmosphere. Actually both of them said the word ‘relaxing’ and that they are not used to it and that it was quite different but they both seem to like it. (Comment 2)

Feeling comfortable and relaxed in the classroom was probably due to the lecturer passing control over to the students by encouraging group work, discussion, questions and engagement with their own partial understandings and previous knowledge in the process of making meaning. Also a relaxed atmosphere is created when students’ mistakes or partially formed views are not penalised. It is by engaging their own previous knowledge that gaps can be found and knowledge, advanced.

#### 4.2.1.3 Valuing instrumental benefits of an autonomous educational experience

In my own diary there is evidence of both the students' and my own positive evaluation of the autonomous teaching and learning experience. In the excerpt below both the teacher and the students positively evaluate focusing on sentence formation and paragraphing in a text, instead of doing tasks in a textbook, in class. These are aspects of academic language which did not appear as such in the lessons provided. This is an example of the lecturer's autonomy by which she offered materials and tasks that allowed students to focus on the targeted aspects of academic language straight on without much preamble or distractions, a hands-on experience for the students:

##### Extract 6

In the second session, I decided to give them a text on this topic for them to analyse how sentences are connected within each paragraph and what their function is in the paragraph. They found this very useful, as it seems they had never done it before. After that, I suggested that they identify the subject-verb-object structure of each sentence and an interesting discussion and learning environment emerged. One of them expressed how useful this class had been for him. (Comment 144 &146)

#### 4.2.1.4 Considering students' needs, interests and aspirations

The next quote shows how important it was for me, the lecturer, to listen to my students' perceptions of their own needs. During a tutorial session one of my students suggested that he would like to practise his writing skills more in class. This was a good reminder for me and I happily implemented it the following day:

##### Extract 7

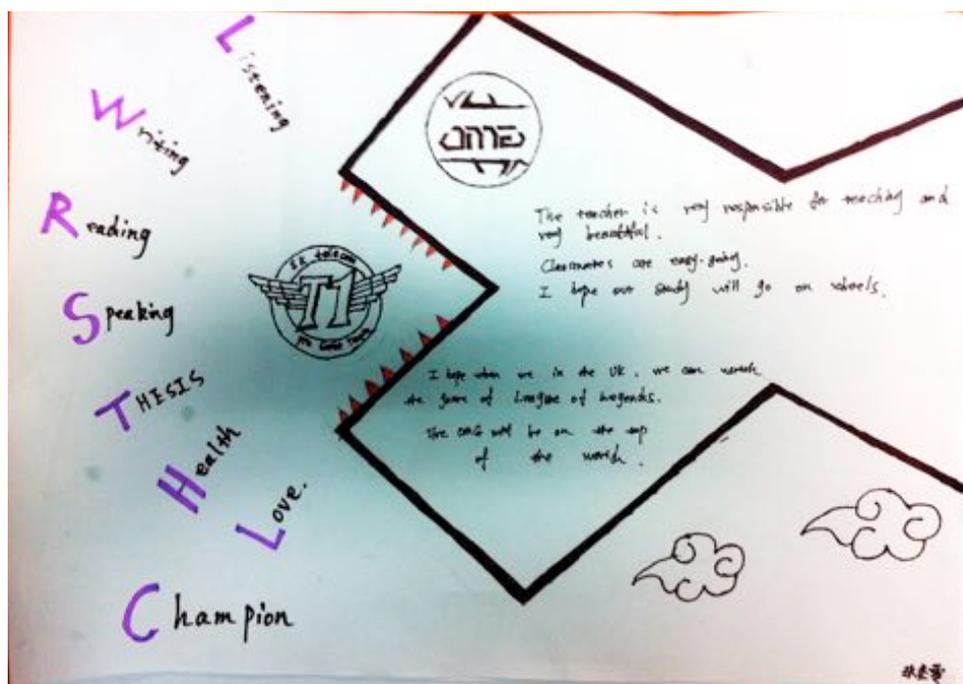
'On the last day of the course I asked students to write a summary of an article I handed out in class, following Ariel's feedback the previous day that reminded me that it is a great idea to write more in class and to have feedback in class. I think it was a successful task.'

During a tutorial I asked students several questions, the first one of which was '*How do you feel about having opportunities to choose what is best for yourself regarding your learning, to make decisions about your own learning?*'. The most salient theme emerging from an analysis of question 1 is that choosing what to work on is useful. It is worth noticing that while most responses refer to 'choosing or making decisions',

some others refer to ‘what is best for them’ understood as what they liked the most, which reveals the ambiguity of this question. All interviewees explicitly said they liked having options to choose from according to their needs because it is ‘useful’ and ‘helpful’. One of them said that they knew what they needed to improve; another one said that it was good to focus on their weaknesses; another one said that she likes it because it is different from the way she is used to working in China where the teacher tells her what to do and not to do; she said that she can learn much more if she chooses her favourite one; and another one said that even though he does not like working on what he needs to improve, he still chooses it because it is useful. One of them said that choosing what is best for them is difficult and that not everyone knows what is best for them. He argued that it is good to choose the level of the task but not what to do. He thinks that this is a serious decision that must be taken by the instructor. Another student said that sometimes by choosing what is best for themselves they risk missing out on working with others. Finally, two students focused more on what they like about this learning experience. One of them said that she liked *doing presentations* because it helped her to overcome her shyness and working on the grammar items that the teacher has highlighted in her writing; she said that she had never done this before and that it was very useful. The other student paid attention to the differences between this new and their habitual ways of working: in particular he mentioned *the structure of texts*, and having the opportunity to *walk around the class and discuss their work and questions with other classmates*, an opportunity he did not have in his past experiences. I made the best of the opportunity to ask one student to elaborate on a comment he had made in class regarding using class time to conduct a survey outside of the classroom. To my surprise he corrected my misunderstanding regarding his feelings. He said that he prefers working in the classroom, sitting down and doing his work in class.

Drawing 1 below is by Alfie, who refers to his aspirations to study abroad. This includes his hobby, namely, competition games, learning the language, and primary needs such as love and good health. In other words, he aspires to learn more about the language and about his spare-time interest when he is in the UK and to have love and good health. The latter is reminiscent of the first Exploratory Practice principle which states that ‘life is the main issue’ in the educative experience (Allwright and Hanks, 2009).

## Drawing 1



Below is a conversation about Alfie's drawing among his classmates:

### Extract 8

Elizabeth: I like this logo – Champions League America.

Me: Who made it?

Everyone: Alfie

Me: But he's not here. Oh he cannot explain that.

Benjamin: I think it's like a shark

Me: Aw yes

Benet: It's ... listening, writing, speaking ... all English

Ariel: Inside is maybe Alfie's history. Xiangyun - it means luck and it's very ... in modern days not many people know it ... the clouds mean good luck.

Alice: the Chinese name is Xiangyun

Alfie's classmates comment on his hobby, his reference to learning all the English language skills and his possibly including his own history, that is, his interests, needs and aspirations. And he includes clouds which as one of his classmates says mean good luck.

The drawing features two games, one of which seems to be just about to defeat the other one. They are the League of Legends, a multiplayer online battle arena, and the OMG, a Chinese e-sports organization, which is made up of seven players. The word ‘champion’ is written down at the bottom. There is also some text that reads ‘the teacher is very responsible for teaching and very beautiful. Classmates are easy going. I hope our study will go on wheels. I hope when we in the UK we can watch the Game of League of Legends. The OMG will be on the top of the world’. On the left hand side there are also seven words listed down: listening, writing, reading, speaking, thesis, health, and love.

The transcript above shows that Alfie’s interests and goals are varied. On the one hand, his goals are instrumental as he aspired to develop his academic skills. On the other hand, he mentions his hobbies as well as more basic human needs such as ‘love’ and ‘health’. This drawing could be regarded as a reflection of the self, as evidence of ‘developing awareness of the self’.

#### 4.2.1.5 Reflecting is being in charge of one’s own learning

With reference to interview question 4, ‘*Do you think that being reflective about your learning helps you in any way? How?*’, participants talk about whether having *reflected* about their learning has been of benefit for them. Apart from saying that reflecting is becoming aware and that it helps them improve, they also said that reflecting is being in charge of their own learning, and is doing things by themselves. Below is a transcript of a students’ response to interview question 4:

##### Extract 9

Reflecting is ‘doing things by ourselves: in our context the classes are shorter and the teacher speaks all the time; I think it’s useful and better to do projects, find questions by ourselves’.

#### 4.2.1.6 Positive feelings about a learner-centred class

The painting below by Barbara shows her positive feelings about learning in class, and a change from negative expectations into positive valuation. Barbara’s picture is very colourful and shows how her feelings about attending lessons changed by the end of the first week. Before the first class, she had low expectations for the lesson;

she thought she would get bored; after the class started, she noticed that actually it was not as bad as she had expected; by the end of the class, she thought the lesson was actually good, and by the end of the week she felt lessons were interesting.

Drawing 2



During the talking-about-drawings session, Elizabeth picks Barbara's drawing and says that it is very interesting. Then she reads the words on it aloud:

Extract 10

Elizabeth: (pointing at Barbara's drawing) I think this one is very interesting. (Reading the picture) Before the class, it was boring; when the class started, it wasn't bad; and when the class was over, she felt good! It's interesting.

The drawing below by Elizabeth also depicts a change in attitude towards learning. She compares her previous negative attitude to learning with her new positive outlook on the teaching and learning experience. In the past she did not like studying; she was more eager to play games and watch TV; and her parents were concerned about her. Now, she is motivated and enjoys learning. She is eager to do well in the IELTS exam. She likes being in charge of her own learning; and if she has questions or doubts she knows she can ask the lecturer or her classmates. She

likes working collaboratively. By working hard and being in charge of her learning, she now sees herself as a successful learner.

Her drawing is divided in two parts, one that refers to the past and another one that refers to the present. On the left-hand side, where it reads 'Before', there is a drawing of herself saying: 'Always play. I don't want to study'. There are also two images: one that reads 'games' and another one that reads 'TV'. At the bottom there is an image of her parents with a sad face and a message that reads: 'Parents aren't happy. They worry about me'. In contrast, on the right-hand side, where it reads 'now', the word 'ME!' stands out followed by two phrases: 'Get IELTS!' and 'When I make mistakes or I don't understand, I'll ask Ana or friends'. At the bottom there are three people and a message that reads 'We are a happy family'. And a lump or semi-circle expands from the dividing line into the present time. Inside it reads: 'Through something, I'm a successful learner'.

Drawing 3



In response to interview question 3, 'What do you think is and should be the role of the university? Who should universities be for?', some students said that 'the university is a place to learn knowledge about one's major, what one is interested in'. These words suggest that they see the university as a place where there is more freedom to choose to study and work on what one is interested in. This view of the

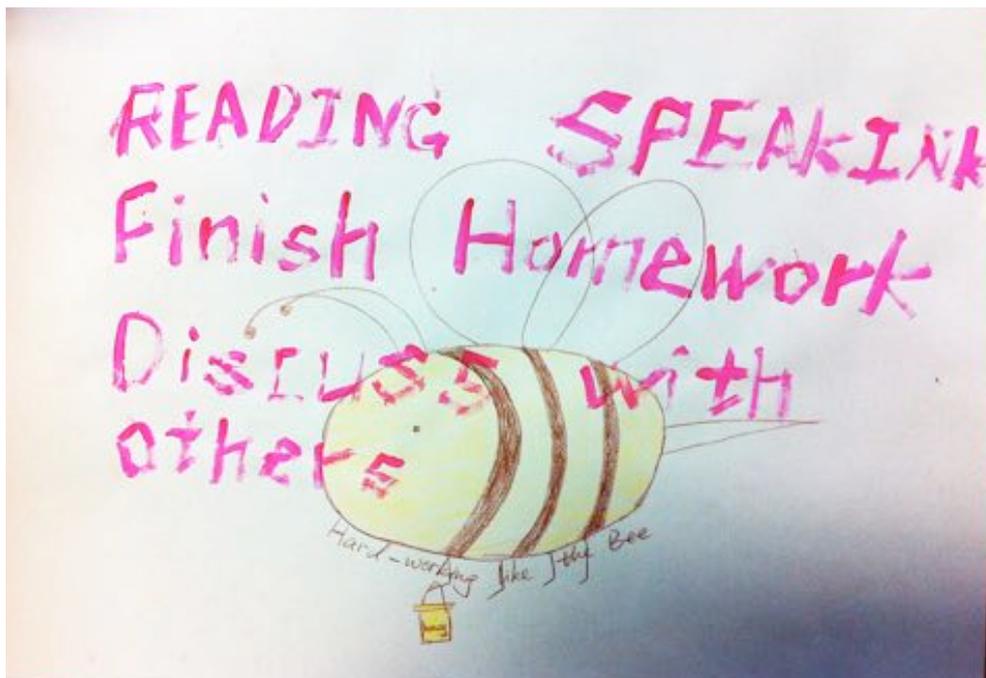
university could be associated with contentment with student-centred educative experiences.

#### 4.2.2. Theme 2: Developing awareness of self

Learning more about oneself is a theme that has appeared along the different sources of data, more prominently in the students' drawings and the interviews with them. Below are two reflective drawings by the same student, Alice, which reflect awareness of her being a good and hard-working learner.

The one below depicts a giant bee. Under it, it reads 'hard-working like the bee'; and above this image she highlights the following tasks and skills: reading, speaking, finish[ing] homework, and discuss[ing] with others.

Drawing 4



In the transcript below Benet asks Alice why she has drawn a bee. He is puzzled because in his memory Alice has been late to several lessons, which is not a typical characteristic of a hard-working bee. In response, she explains that she has been late because of transport issues, and still highlights her being 'hard-working like the bee' by 'reading, speaking, finish[ing] homework and discuss[ing] with others':

### Extract 11

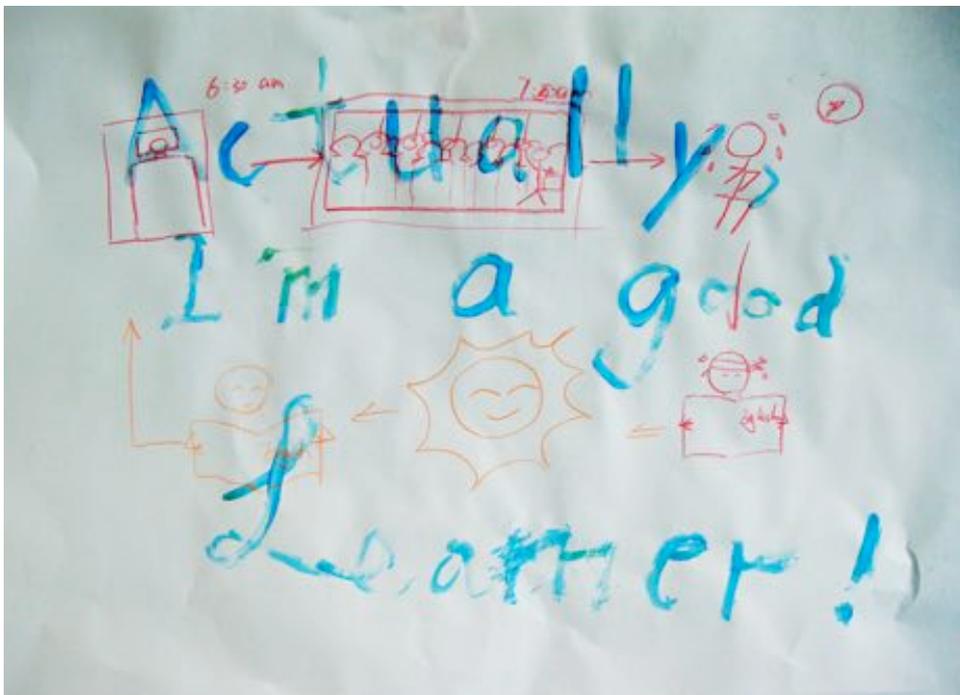
Benet: Why did you draw a bee? According to my memory you were late ...

Alice: Because the subway is crowded.

Benet: You can fly to here (laughing)

Below is Alice's second drawing, which depicts her routine of getting up early, taking a train, and passing through a hot day of hard work. The phrase, 'Actually, I am a good learner', appears as a logical conclusion or a realization after she had reflected on what she had done and learned along that week.

### Drawing 5



Below is the transcript of the conversation about this drawing in which Charly, one of her classmates, makes sense of it by connecting each small image in it with the written message above the images, 'Actually, I'm a good learner':

## Extract 12

Alice: (Reading the words in her drawing) Actually, I am a good learner.

Charly: (Pointing at the different elements in the drawing) Getting on the train, hard work, come to lessons, sun rise in the middle, and then gets back... sweating

Me: And this?

Charly: Get up.

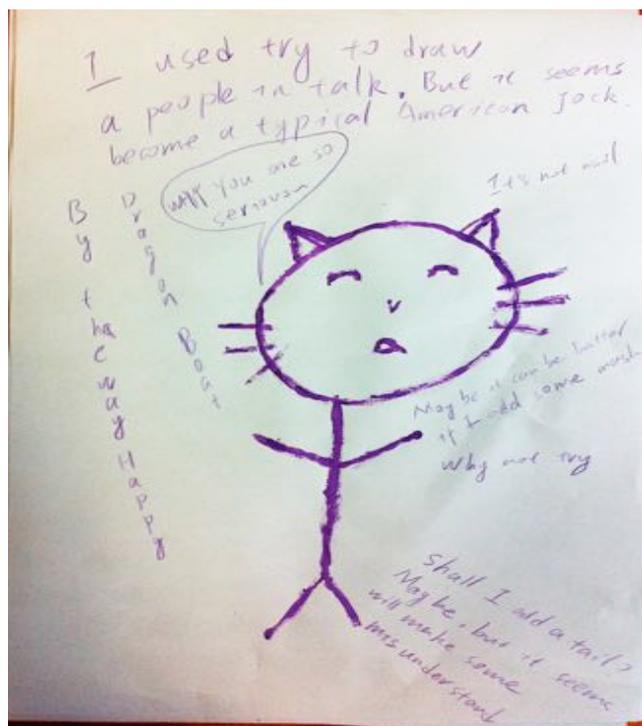
### **4.2.3. Theme 3: Developing sociological and cultural awareness**

Developing sociological and cultural awareness refers to identifying, appreciating and critiquing either one's own or foreign social, cultural and educational habits. This includes questioning a people's attitude or disposition; trying to understand a different societal and cultural context; identifying one's own societal and cultural habits; resisting a perceived imposition of foreign values; resisting what is perceived as a threat; starting to question my beliefs in the efficacy and appropriateness of a learner-centred pedagogy; and views of the role of the university reveal sociological awareness of own context. Each of the aforementioned constitutive elements of this theme will be developed below with examples from all the data types.

#### 4.2.3.1 Questioning a people's attitude or disposition

The drawing below highlights the participant's question about someone's attitude or disposition. It features a cat asking a why question, 'Why are you so serious?', about someone's or a people's attitude or disposition, that of being serious. In other words, this drawing can be interpreted as depicting someone's drive to know the reasons why someone is so serious, to understand a people's attitude or disposition. At the same time, his question can be interpreted as questioning or resisting a people's way of being.

## Drawing 6



Below is a transcript of a short conversation some students had about Ariel's drawing (above):

### Extract 13

Elizabeth: Who's this?

Benet: (points at Ariel)

Ariel: (feels embarrassed and giggles)

Elizabeth: (reads the words in the picture to herself. Then aloud) 'Why are you so serious?'

Alice: Is this cat a symbol of you?

Ariel: No. The cat includes people ... (everyone moves around and shows no interest in listening to what he is saying so he does not explain it further).

From this short dialogue it is clear that Ariel's classmates seem uninterested in learning more about the meaning behind his drawing. He seems to be seen as a threat by his classmates; as if his questions were too forward, or political, or threatening for some reason. The only piece of information that can be rescued from the short dialogue is that the cat represents people. In this sense, it is a person who questions the attitude or disposition of another person. As was hinted above, this could be interpreted as curiosity about, or perhaps resistance to, another person's attitude or

disposition. His classmates might not be ready to question a people's way of being and therefore choose not to engage in learning about its meaning.

His asking a why question, 'Why are you so serious?', inevitably resonates with Exploratory Practice (Allwright and Hanks, 2009), a framework for exploring why questions to gain deeper understanding and advance knowledge. Asking one's own questions is an example of a learner-centred practice. Due to the sociological lining of his question the meaning behind this drawing has been included as part of the theme 'developing sociological and cultural awareness'.

#### 4.2.3.2 Trying to understand a different societal and cultural context

My diary is permeated by reflections on society and culture; in other words, I am trying to understand the Chinese society and culture and its relationship with my teaching and learning; how the classroom is a site where the societal and cultural habits are displayed and questioned; and the dynamics between the teacher's and the students' different societal and cultural habits, and the advantages and difficulties it brings about to those involved. My diary also includes summaries of lessons, one of which depicts an occasion when, while my students are discussing business, which is one of the syllabus topics, I start thinking and taking notes on the whiteboard of an alternative to the current capitalist system. By performing this I wanted to promote imaginative thinking and the questioning of the current economy. In other words, I was trying to incorporate a reflection and generate a discussion in my practice on how to create a better society and world because I thought that education should be a tool to think about ourselves and the others and how to deal with human suffering (Herzog, 2016). In response to my encouragement to talk about society and culture, one student talks about this with me after the class. He is inquisitive about the new culture and society he will be confronted with in the UK and has opinions about his own society and culture:

#### Extract 14

After the class, Alfie came to me and asked me about the UK and whether some beliefs about the English's dislike for the Chinese were true. He seemed concerned about how the English see the Chinese, whether they thought all Chinese were silly and non-thinking. He told me that many Chinese are not serious about studying; they only want to have fun. A teacher of his has told him that the Brits go to university to learn, and he asked me whether this was true!

We talked about stereotypes, generalisations and I told him that living abroad is a great opportunity to learn and broaden the mind and that he has to decide whether he wants to do that or have fun and have a different experience.

In the excerpt above, I try to open up different world views, and the student shows interest in enquiring about views of Chinese people in the West and expresses his critique of his own culture and society. Like this student, I also wanted to understand the culture and society I was confronted with in China, their view of the world, their beliefs, ways of being and thinking in order to understand my students better and to develop a better practice. In the excerpt below I reflect on the value of being an outsider:

#### Extract 15

Another thing I was thinking today is that it is easier to see positive and negative societal aspects when you are an outsider. I used to think that it was crazy to trust in an outsider's view out of a few months of observation. However, I can see how much we can see as outsiders. For example, as an outsider in Beijing, I can see the people sleeping on the pavement, people selling carton, the poor [...] However, if I think of Argentina, I remember that there were people on the street; there were poor; there were unjust situations, but somehow they become normal, natural when you are an insider. Now when I go to Argentina, I also observe with surprise many differences with the English society where I have been living for the last five years. In Argentina, I am now a bit of an outsider as I can see things with fresh eyes.

'Trying to understand a different societal and cultural context' might also refer to the students' view of the world as being formed in relation to the environment where they have grown up. In response to the democratic pedagogy I was trying to develop, one of the students, Ariel, argues that a democratic pedagogy might not work well in all cases. Below is an excerpt from my diary in which I reproduced the conversation Ariel and I had during a tutorial:

#### Extract 16

He decided to tell me his opinion about working democratically in the classroom. He thinks that it does not always work. He says that a good leader is necessary. It is not the first time he makes a description of each of his classmates: who is a good student, who is clever (but needs a follower?), who is a follower, who are not interested in learning, and who is a good communicator [...] He wants to learn and he thinks his classmates need a leader, the teacher; otherwise, they will not make sound decisions. He gave Charly's example in today's class. He said that when I gave them the option of working on a job interview or reading a newspaper article, everyone chose the latter not because it

was best for them but because it was easier. He said that Charly chose the weather forecast! (I did not realise). He went on to say that China calls itself a democracy but it is not (we all know that!, he said). This is when he said that his father works for the government. He implied that China is the opposite of a democracy, and that 70% of the population benefit from the system while the remaining 30% sacrifice themselves for the benefit of the former.

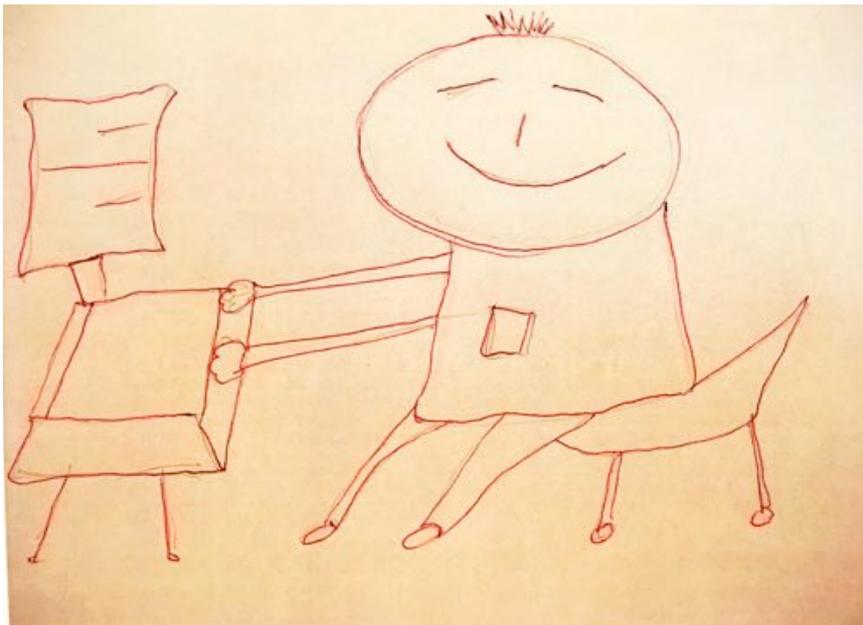
Of the Chinese society, this student says that it is not a democracy. He seems to have applied the same rules to the classroom. That is, he thinks that a democratic approach to teaching and learning does not always work because there are people who are lazy and need to be told what to do; otherwise they make the wrong choices.

#### 4.2.3.3 Identifying one's own societal and cultural habits

This includes identifying a societal habit; being happy with who we are, with our customs and values; and resisting a perceived threat to one's habits or an imposition of different norms.

Reflecting on the topic of the third week, which is social media and IT, Benjamin says that he has drawn a Chinese societal habit. Below are his drawing and a transcript of his talk about it:

Drawing 7



## Extract 17

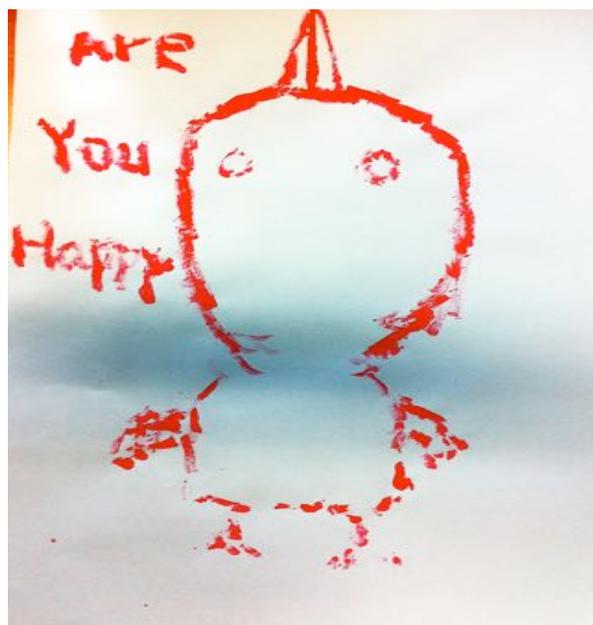
OK, it's a kid sitting at the computer. On the screen how to communicate with strangers... he's just interested in playing computer games. There is his smart-phone (pointing) he doesn't want to play any sports game; just to stay at home. I think this is true in China.

### 4.2.3.4 Resisting a perceived imposition of foreign values

Resisting difference has appeared strongly in a student's drawings. In my diary, I also reflect on my working hard so that the students take charge of their own learning and do not depend so much on me. In other words, believing in my learner-centred pedagogy, I resist giving in to a more teacher-centred practice which these students seem to be more used to. However, I allow myself to question my own pedagogy and in the face of resistance I sometimes give in to a more teacher-led practice.

Below is a drawing by Charly of a big red chicken and a message that reads 'Are you happy'. In his words, it represents his being happy. There seems to be a connotation of resistance to a perceived imposition of different societal and cultural values and norms on him in the classroom. No matter what he is or looks like, he is happy with who he is.

Drawing 8



In the first session when Charly is not present, two students try to make sense of the painting as shown below:

Extract 18

Participant: a chicken – maybe a flying chicken

Benjamin: stupid chicken

In the second session, when Charly is present, Benjamin and I ask him questions about his drawing. He says that the chicken has no meaning. He meant to express being happy. Below is the talk about it:

Extract 19

I: Charly, I want to know about the bird.

Charly: it's actually a chicken; the beak; it's a chicken.

I: what does it mean?

Charly: I think it means happy

I: but there is a question mark

Charly: maybe I should've drawn a smile. It's a way of showing that I'm happy – the bird has no meaning really

I: ok, thank you.

Below is a second drawing by Charly. He draws the lecturer on one corner sailing on calm waters and the students on the opposite corner powerfully drawn together as lotus flowers stemming from fierce waters and rising highly and powerfully in the direction of the lecturer. In his words, he meant to draw fists but he ended up drawing flowers. Below are both his drawing and a transcript of his talk about it:

Drawing 9



Extract 20

Benjamin: how about this one?

Charly: it's the lotus. First, I wanted to draw a fist. The different colours refer to us, the eight students. The same-coloured flowers are the two girls because they are always together – the red one. You (the teacher) are here.

I: why did you want to draw a fist in the first place?

Charly: gather us together – maybe it's like the lotus

He does not say that the picture shows the students resisting foreign ideas brought by the lecturer. However, this meaning could be implied in his drawing, especially when analyzing his three drawings together, this one, the one above and the one that will come next. On the top right corner he has signed his drawing with the words 'Lion Peng'. However, this is not his real name. One might wonder whether the word 'lion' has been used to convey the meaning of resisting strongly and powerfully.

Below is Charly's third drawing and his words about it. In his words, he has drawn a bat or devil to represent the lecturer who throws arrows to the students. This clearly shows his perceiving the lecturer as attacking the students, their idiosyncrasy:

## Drawing 10



## Extract 21

Charly: This is the arrows and this is the ground and the red for blood. These bodies, maybe it's us ...it's full of arrows, someone shoots at us, Chinese. That's me who never speaks Chinese but English. Can you see that?

Benjamin: How many people?

Charly: Just one or two but it represents all the students... because sometimes in art 1 does not really mean 4 or 6 – it can be 8, 7 or maybe more.

Alice: what is the big red thing?

Charly: Maybe the devil - I am not good at drawing [...]

Benjamin: Not bad. That's a bat.

Charly: Yes.

I: Who is the bat?

Charly: Guess

I: Am I the bat?

(Charly's facial expression indicates that that is the case)

I: Ok, more?

Below is the continuation of the talk about Charly's drawing above, which appears to be a critique of the teaching. The transcript also reveals the lecturer's denial of Charly's critique:

## Extract 22

I: Can I ask? Is this like a joke?

Charly: Yes, like a joke.

I: Do you think it's good, if in class we are learning English, any language, to speak your own language? Do you think that might be helpful?

Charly: Maybe, sometimes

I: Interesting, thank you.

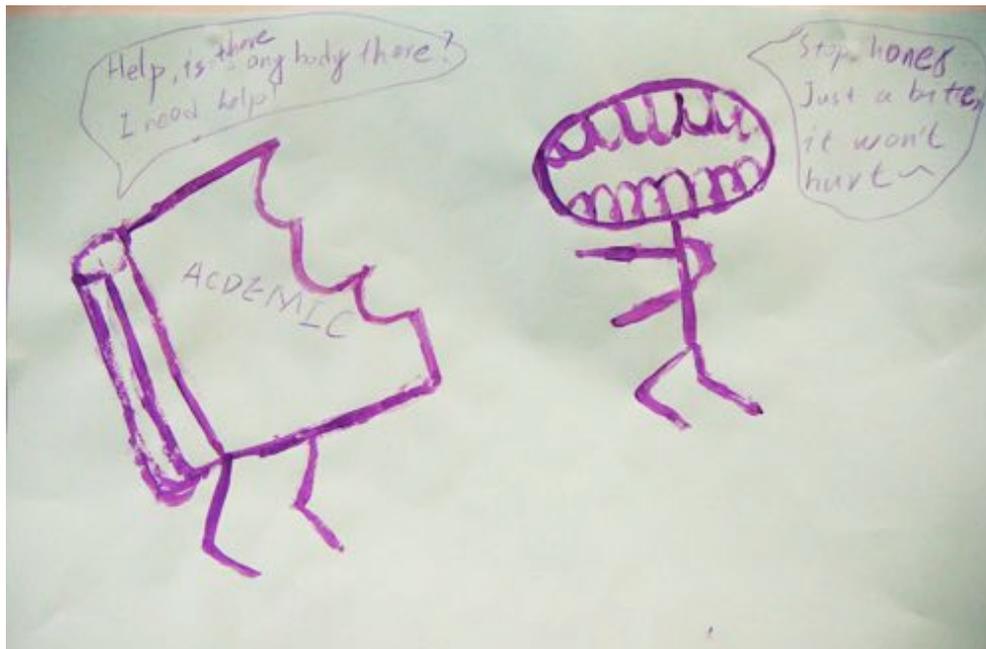
In the excerpt above the lecturer's first reaction is of disbelief; 'Is this a joke?' she asks. The student agrees that this is a joke probably not to be disrespectful. Then the lecturer, interpreting the student's emphasis on his speaking only English in class as criticism to the lecturer's insistence that students speak English, asks him whether he thinks that it would be best to speak his own language at times. Finally, when the lecturer asks who is the bat and the student implies that it is her, the conversation is brought to a halt. What is surprising is that as the lecturer it seems that perhaps subconsciously I ignored this criticism, perhaps it was a subconscious defensive strategy, as there is no evidence of my reflecting on this in the diary or asking this student further questions later on in the course.

### 4.2.3.5 Resisting what is perceived as a threat

Another example of resistance to a perceived threat perhaps to the socio-cultural order is performed by some students in the form of disengagement from discussing's drawing below. During a session when students walk around the classroom and ask each other questions about each other's drawings, when it comes to discussing Ariel's drawing below, they quite evidently move away from it without engaging in discussing it. Perhaps the students see him as a threat to their socio-cultural order as he is outspoken and has big opinions about most things. In this sense he seems to be quite different from the rest of them.

His drawing is a personified book and a personified mouth having a conversation. The academic book says 'Help! Is there anybody there? I need help!' and the mouth says 'Stop [it], honey. Just a bite won't hurt':

## Drawing 11



When talking about his drawing to me, the lecturer, Ariel explains that his drawing shows the emotions of fear and thirst for knowledge that drive human beings to learn and know. Below is a transcript of this conversation:

### Extract 23

I: how about this one? Any questions?

Ariel: Two emotions - fear and hunger. Fear of ignorance makes us hungry for knowledge. Katulo (?) speaks of a simple idea: the relationship between humans and knowledge. There is a movie about these emotions: fear of being ignorant makes people be hungry for knowledge. I wanted to write about this but I didn't  
Lecturer: That's fine, that's fine. Are you this one or this one?

Ariel: This one. (pointing at the person with a mouth head)

I: Ok, fantastic. Thank you.

I, the lecturer, ask him questions about his drawing and he explains it to me by talking about the relationship between people and knowledge and how people's fear of being ignorant makes them want to learn. The rest of the students do not join the conversation, similarly to what has happened when he talks about his first drawing the previous week. In this occasion his classmates quite bluntly seem to resist what

Ariel has to say by not engaging in asking questions and moving away from his drawing. What it is exactly that his classmates are resisting in him is not transparent. He is clearly more political and unafraid to speak up. He is different. He has strong opinions about everything, which might make his classmates feel uncomfortable. Perhaps he sounds pretentious or appears as if he knows it all and that is what his classmates resist.

So far it is his classmates who appear to ignore Ariel's drawing or resist engaging in any kind of dialogue about it. The only discussion about it is between him and the lecturer, me. Judging by the drawing and by what Ariel says about it, it seems to represent a celebration of knowledge over ignorance; in other words, a celebration of knowing, learning, reading and surpassing ignorance. At the same time, it can be interpreted as a critique of ignorant attitudes, lack of drive to learn, to enquire and to question as hinted by the text in the drawing 'a bite [of knowledge] won't hurt' as if the common practice was not to engage in deep enquiry and knowledge seeking. In other words, it could be interpreted as a critique of uncritical, unquestioning, uncurious attitudes; or as a statement against such attitudes: 'a bite [of knowledge] won't hurt'. Whether this critique includes all Chinese people including his classmates is not clear but if this is the case this might be the reason for his classmates' lack of engagement in learning about his work.

#### 4.2.3.6 Starting to question my beliefs in the efficacy and appropriateness of a learner-centred pedagogy

Another example of my students and my developing sociological and cultural awareness is evidenced in their resisting at times a foreign, more autonomous pedagogy, and in my moving from resisting to adapting and from adapting to resisting to a local teacher-centred practice.

In the face of a perceived subtle resistance to some aspects of the pedagogy for autonomy I was deploying, I started to feel uncertain about its appropriateness in the Chinese context. At times I found myself making most of the decisions in the classroom. Having to follow pre-packaged material was one of the reasons for this. Another reason why my practice was in part teacher-centred was my *adapting or giving in* to the teacher-centred pedagogy the students seemed to have been used to

and to be demanding at times. There was to some extent student resistance to the bits of practice that were alien to them. My response to their resistance was at times resistance and at other times acceptance. In other words, either because they were used to it or because it was easier for them sometimes students preferred it if I told them what to do, if I was in charge of making all the decisions in the class. Their resistance made me question the efficacy and appropriateness of my practice in that context.

I was also frustrated that some students would not work as hard as I would have expected. Sometimes they would not do their homework or make decisions and work conscientiously. One of the students, Charly, expressed feeling distracted and not understanding instructions well during a tutorial. In the light of these difficulties, I started questioning the appropriateness of my pedagogy.

#### 4.2.3.7 Views of the role of the university reveal awareness of own context

In response to interview question 3 (See Appendix 4) regarding the students' perception of the role of the university and of the students in it, some of the students' responses reveal an awareness of their societal habits regarding this issue. In other words some of the students' responses reveal an identification of the role of the university in their context. One participant said that university students should take part in the student union if they wish to understand how the university works, as well as in societal activities outside of the university, indicating that this is the way things are done in their context. Two participants said that everyone should have the opportunity to go to university if they wish to, which could be interpreted as a critique of the educational system, and one of them said that in their context people from rural areas cannot afford going to the university and they are therefore left out from society, identifying a social habit that should not be. By voicing their views of the role of the university these students developed sociological and cultural awareness of their own context.

While some of the students' responses resonate with the mainstream or dominant discourse, some others reveal awareness of how the university is perceived in their own context and their questioning that discourse. Regarding the former, some students said that the university is a place 'to learn in order to find a good job', 'to be

free from the educative pressures of the previous education system’, and ‘to get a degree’. One student explained this function by saying: ‘actually primary and secondary schools are places to learn knowledge but when you are older you can learn by yourself as you live in society’. Regarding the latter, critiquing her own university system, one student said that universities should not be places to learn from books only, neither should they be places just to release stress, nor to pass and graduate easily. By saying what universities should not be like, she is listing the socially accepted views of universities.

#### **4.2.4. Theme 4: Sharing and communicating articulated understanding with others**

Another emerging theme in the data is the power of working with others, talking about one’s thoughts, ideas and views as a way of individual and communal development. This theme will be developed following the following sub-categories: Developing one’s own views by working with others: individual and communal development; Requesting articulated understanding; My students and I both think that criticality relates to a multitude of voices; Doing art is an exciting way of expressing and explaining one’s thoughts; Reflecting is talking about one’s learning issues; and Learning is a social activity.

4.2.4.1 Developing one’s own views by working with others: individual and communal development The drawing below reveals, among many other features, both individual and group development strongly, which seems to implicate that both are complimentary, that is, working together, learning from each other, and sharing ideas enhance one’s own development of self; and at the same time, voicing one’s own thoughts, interests and views enhances communal understanding:

Drawing 12



Individual, as opposed to communal, development is expressed by the phrases, 'Everyone has own ideas' and 'Each people', and perhaps by the drawing of a person riding a bicycle. The value of working with others or building a community is expressed through language such as, 'In this week I make seven friends and the teacher from the UK' and 'The PSE, a family', and through images of people.

As indicated above, this drawing refers to many other aspects of the educative experience as well. For example, instrumental gains of the experience are expressed through phrases such as 'improve skills!', 'reading', 'speaking', 'grammar' and 'writing' and under each of these headings, Elizabeth, the author of this drawing, specifies what she has learned. Other phrases include, 'homework' and 'We do the presentation usually'. There are also images of two presentations by students on the differences between the Chinese and British cultures. Positive atmosphere is expressed through language such as, 'Good mood', and visually by the image of a sun. In the transcript below two students highlight these meanings emerging from the drawing. Each of them makes sense of it in their own ways, perhaps in ways that resonate with their own language learning experiences. What Benet mentions resonates with his own painting which reflects the stages in the language learning

process. Alice focuses on the colours in this painting, which might refer to the positive atmosphere as revealed in phrases such as ‘good mood’:

#### Extract 24

I: Have you seen this one?

Alice: Colourful

Benet (reading aloud): Improve skills. It includes all the parts of English: speaking, grammar, writing, homework. Good, very good.

Everyone: (laughing)

#### 4.2.4.2 Requesting articulated understanding

Articulating understanding features strongly in my own reflective diary. I consistently write about having asked my students to tell and remind each other what they did the day before in class and for homework. Similarly I ask them to follow a learning structure, which consists of planning work, doing it and reporting on it by making a poster and talking about it. There is consistency reference to my asking students to articulate and formalise their thoughts and partial understandings, first orally and then in writing, first in posters and then as part of an essay. Below is an excerpt that illustrates my encouraging students to think, reflect and orally articulate what they have learned:

#### Extract 25

I asked a few students to tell the students who had been absent the day before what we had done in class and what they had to do for homework. (Comment 53)

The excerpt below shows the structure of lessons and the importance given to sharing the work done via a poster presentation, which involves preparing and presenting the poster, and evaluating the work done and the presentation given:

#### Extract 26

They had to think of the characteristics of that particular society and culture and put their ideas down in a poster in 15 minutes. After that they would read a different book excerpt each group taken from Travels in China by Roland Barthes and Watching the English by Kate Fox in half an hour. They would have 15 minutes to share key points in the texts and to put their ideas down in the poster. The last 15 minutes were allocated to their presentations to the other group. Very briefly, I elicited good points and aspects to improve from each presentation. Among them were eye contact both from the speaker and the audience, using meta-language to catch the audience’s attention, and time

management – presenting in more depth what is really relevant – not all, superficially.  
(Comment 55)

Requesting articulated understanding is a way of giving students opportunities to put their thoughts and views into words, both orally and in writing. I believe that by doing that they not only use and practise the target language but also develop their partial understandings more accurately or wholly.

#### 4.2.4.3 My students and I both think that criticality relates to a multitude of voices

In my own lecturer-researcher diary I refer to criticality as 1. acknowledging marginalised views of the world when discussions are univocal. In a similar light, when asked about what they think criticality is, my students say that it is 2. sharing one's views, ideas and understandings with others; 3. welcoming all views; and 4. dealing with disagreement.

Firstly, in my lecturer-researcher diary there is evidence that I focus on promoting what I understood criticality to be at the time, such as voicing arguments counter to mainstream, market-driven views of the world. For example, sensing that criticality was related to democracy, justice and humanism, in discussions in class, if the line of argument is mainstream only, I try to voice alternative arguments. In the example below, students were discussing factors to be considered when evaluating a good living city based on a listening task. When reporting what they had discussed many of them mentioned security as a key factor. Noticing that the discussion of this factor was unidirectional, I voiced an alternative understanding of security:

#### Extract 27

Some interesting issues came up, about security, most of them said that security was something important for them and some of the speakers in the listening as well; and of course that reminded me of an anti-neoliberal movement which obviously criticizes security as a kind of mask for anything that the government doesn't want to really go deep into analyzing. And I said that, not in that way, and the most mature student seemed to really kind of understand and seemed interested in what I was saying; the others as well, I think. (Comment 20)

By adding a view of the world that was not included in the syllabus, I was opening up a space for students to think and discuss it too.

Secondly, during a semi-structured interview with me during a tutorial, many students expressed that criticality or being critical is talking about and sharing their ‘thinking’, their ‘views’ and what they understood from reading an article with their classmates.

Thirdly, one of the students, Alice, said that criticality or being critical is not about showing disagreement but rather listening to each other and understanding each other’s point of view and learning from each other. She said that in discussions she would always agree with others because she sees that as an opportunity to open up possibilities and considering views she has not thought of. In a similar light, another student, Benet, referred to criticality as involving ‘adapting’, ‘inviting’ and ‘enlarging’ views:

Extract 28

Different people have different ideas. We can adapt a part of a different idea and invite your own idea, give up the part you don’t agree with, to enlarge your brain, I think.

Another student, Ariel, pointed out that ‘it’s not a quarrel’ of views. For him, being critical involves ‘seeing something we don’t know’. ‘We don’t need to trust every piece of information’. Different views ‘can grow and stay with each other; it’s about trusting different views’. Another student, Charly, said that they were critical when they *asked questions* after their classmates’ presentations, which helped the presenters *be specific* about their work.

Fourthly, one student, Elizabeth, said that being critical is ‘a good way of communicating’ with others. She focused on – perhaps due to my mentioning this in the question – what happens when there is disagreement in a discussion. She said that learning to deal with disagreement is a good communication skill. Similarly, another student, Barbara, said that sharing her own opinion and views with others was good regardless of whether they agree or not with her thinking.

#### 4.2.4.4 Doing art is an exciting way of expressing and explaining one’s thoughts

Reflecting on their own learning through painting helped students articulate and formalise their thoughts and share them with others. Several students indicated that

doing art was a good prompt to speak more, express their views, and improve their speaking and organisational skills; it was a way of expressing and explaining their thoughts, and an exciting way of learning and expressing themselves.

Some students also said that it was a good way of developing their art skills. One student expressed her willingness to continue reflecting on her learning through painting after this course. Another student said 'It's difficult; I don't have many thinking to draw a picture'. Her words seem to indicate a link between thinking and drawing. After reflecting on using art to express his learning experience, one student said that on top of reflecting, it was important to practise more academic writing as well, which might indicate that he perceived a strong emphasis on reflection rather than on practising academic writing. Other students said that using art is a good way of remembering what has been learned. For example, one student said that he overcame his initial feeling of not being able to do the task by thinking that he 'could make it simple by drawing what he had learned [in order] to remember it and use it directly'.

#### 4.2.4.5 Reflecting is talking about one's learning issues

One participant referred to being reflective as being active, doing things by themselves, talking about their learning with others, and working together. Below are excerpts of their own words:

##### Extract 29

By talking about something we don't understand we will get answers to our questions; being active, working together, having fun and talking about our learning issues is a good way to correct them and improve our language and speaking skill too'.

#### 4.2.4.6 Learning is a social activity

Working with others, and expressing one's thoughts, views and ideas to others also relates to the social role of the university as mentioned by one student who said that 'the university is a place to make friends'. This was in response to an interview question regarding the role of the university and the people in it. This student's response indicates the importance of 'the other', the social aspect of education,

which relates to this theme of articulating thoughts, ideas and views, and sharing them with others to advance and develop better understanding of oneself and others.

#### **4.2.5. Theme 5: Drive to learn and become better**

Improving is another theme that features in both my own diary and the students' perceptions of their own learning experience with me. This includes the following sub-categories which will be developed below: Improving my practice; Reflecting helps us improve; and Drive to learn.

##### 4.2.5.1 Improving my practice

Improving my practice is a concern that features strongly in my reflective diary. I consistently write about what I think went well and did not go well in class and I plan what to do next based on these reflections; in other words, I use my reflections as planning, which is an indication of my developing a process curriculum. It seems that in the process of writing I am trying to understand what we did and said in class better, in more detail, and, based on these new understandings, I plan what to do next. In this sense, it seems that I am working towards change and improvement rather than towards understanding what I am doing and what is going on first. Within exploratory practice, the practitioner research framework that has informed my practice and research, the emphasis has been placed on understanding what is going on before thinking of changing it or improving it. This aim has been emphasised to distinguish exploratory practice from action research whose aim is to bring about change or improvement. Thus my focusing on changing and improving my practice comes as a surprise given that my practice has mainly been informed by the principles of exploratory. However, this distinction has been recently attenuated by action-research scholars who argue that action research also aims to develop understanding (Wyatt, Burns & Hanks, 2016). Having said this, the emphasis that exploratory practice places on focusing on understanding first before thinking about change or improvement is important. It is too easy for practitioners to fall into the temptations of thinking about change before taking time to understand what is going on and decide whether change is really desirable. Despite my being inspired by EP

my diary shows evidence that I breached one of its principles by focusing on change and improvement perhaps too quickly.

#### 4.2.5.2 Reflecting helps us improve

Among the gains of reflecting on one's own practice, my students highlighted correcting one's language mistakes, improving the language, and solving problems. Below is an excerpt from a participant's response to the interview question regarding reflecting about their learning:

Extract 30

Reflecting on our learning helps us improve our English, correct our mistakes, which we wouldn't do otherwise and revise what we have learned.

Participants also said that being reflective is thinking of how to correct and improve their weaknesses and strengthen what they are good at; remembering what has been done and learned; seeing problems; finding their strong points and weak points; and becoming aware of why they performed well or badly. Below, they say it in their own words:

Extract 31

In order to solve problems we need to see them first.

Reflecting is finding our strong points and weaknesses, and thinking about how to correct and improve our weaknesses and to make our strong points even better.

It helps us remember what we have done and learned. After the class at home I think about what I have learned, what I don't know and how to deal with it [...] I like taking notes; when you write on the board, even though I cannot remember it immediately, I review it later at night and I can remember it.

Reflecting about what we do right and wrong makes people think; it's a new idea; it's helpful; it's important to be aware of the reasons why something was wrong.

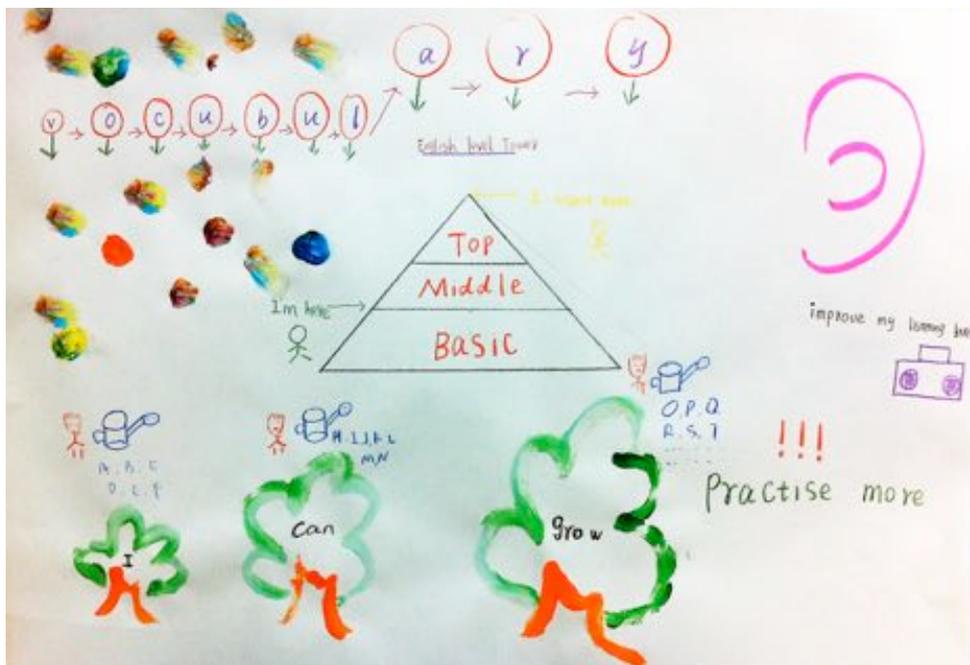
#### 4.2.5.3 Drive to learn

Being driven to learn is a consistent feature in the students' drawings and in what they say about them. Many drawings feature their aspirations, a vision of where they want to get, working hard towards their goals, becoming aware of their weak points

and improving the language, having a serious and hopeful attitude to learning, and enjoying the present learning process.

Below is Benet's first drawing. Due to class time constraints, there is no record of talk about his drawing. I will thus comment on it on the basis of what is evident in the picture, other data from him and my witness knowledge as a teacher. On the right hand side there is an ear, a radio and some text that reads 'improve my listening skill'. On the bottom of the picture there are three trees in ascending order that feature the message 'I can grow'. On top of each tree there is a person, a watering can, and the letters of the alphabet in ascending order. The final message at the end of the row of trees reads 'practise more!!!' In the middle of the drawing there is an 'English level tower' with three compartments – 'top', 'middle' and 'basic' English language level. There is a mark indicating the author is at the bottom of the middle stage, indicating there is substantial work to do and growth to look forward to and strive for. At the top of the picture there is the word 'vocabulary' with little arrows pointing down. On the top left side of the picture there are multi-coloured brush-strokes:

Drawing 13



The drawing below is Benjamin's, which represents his learning experience, a vision of where he wants to get to and how to do it:

Drawing 14



Below is an excerpt of the conversation Benjamin, Alice and Ariel have about his drawing:

Extract 32

Alice: Why did you draw a tree?

Benjamin: It means English, to study English

Ariel: What about the symbols? It looks like (inaudible)

Benjamin: It's a boy.

Ariel: I mean in the tree, the red ones.

Benjamin: It means some parts of English like listening, writing...

Alice: (Inaudible funny comment)

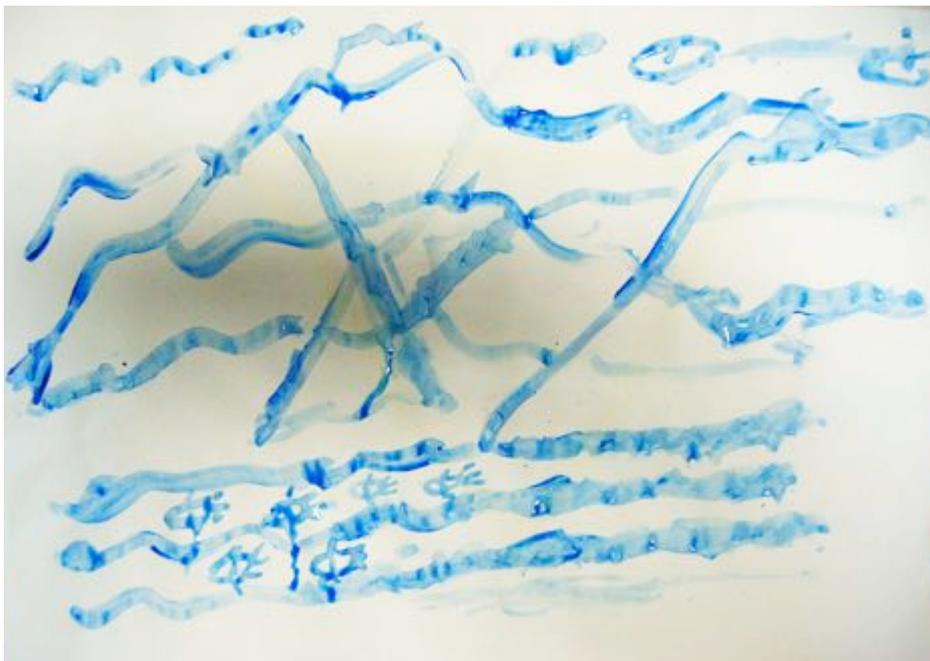
Ariel: (Laughs)

Benjamin: Painful, maybe (laughs)

Benjamin says that the tree represents studying English and that the elements in the crown of the tree are the language components that he needs to master. His classmates thought that they were tombs because the symbols (maybe fruits?) look like crosses. They make jokes about this and Benjamin acknowledges the fact that mastering the language could be painful, implying a resemblance to death.

The drawing below by the same student depicts the same theme, namely having the drive to learn the language. He compares the language learning process with nature: right now he is flowing like the river and he aspires to get to the top of the mountain.

Drawing 15



Four students and the lecturer are actively engaged in making sense of Benjamin's drawing. They see a river, fish, mountains, and clouds. When asked about how these are related to being a language learner, he says that he is in the river, at the feet of the mountain, catching the fish – the vocabulary – at the moment and he wants to get to the top of the mountain. While Benet emphasises the river and the mountains, Charly focuses quite emphatically on the fish and the clouds; Alice asks questions and listens carefully. Unfortunately, due to time constraints, I stopped this talk and asked about another drawing. Below is the talk about this drawing:

Extract 33

Alice: What's this?

Benjamin (Speaking in Chinese. Then he says in English): Fish

Benet: Mountain

Charly: I think this is about the fish

Benet: And the river, and the mountains

Charly: The clouds

I: So how is that related to being a language learner?

Benjamin: Hmm ok ...

Charly: That's a difficult question.

Benjamin: Maybe I am here (pointing to the water) and I want to get to the top of the mountain.

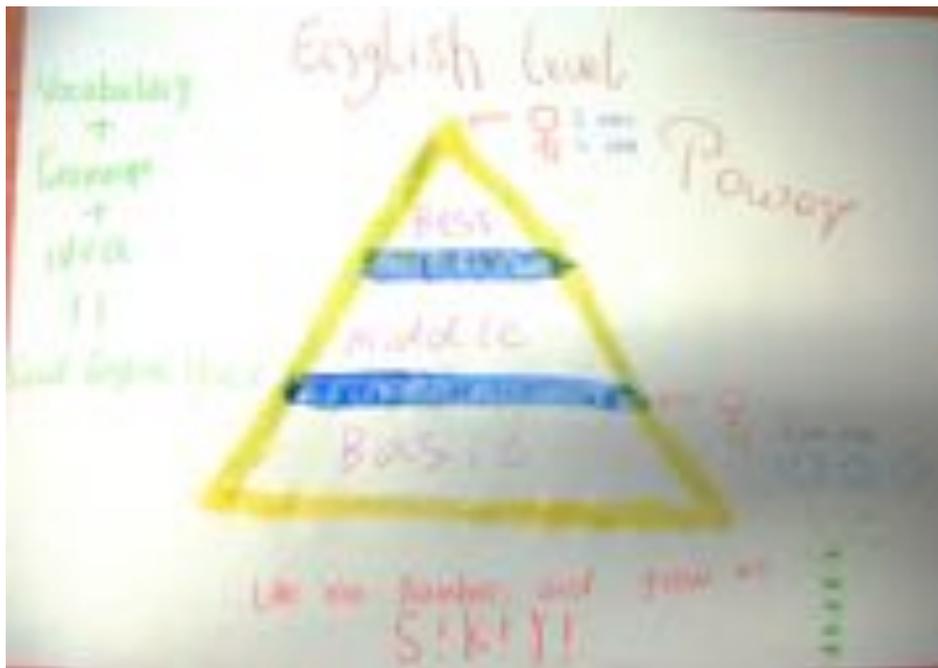
???: And the fish?

Benjamin The fish is about vocabulary.

Alice: The fish catch the vocabulary

Benet's drawing below also depicts his aspirations to excel in the target language.

Drawing 16



Below is a transcript of the conversation Benet and Alice had about his drawing:

Extract 34

Alice: What's the meaning of this?

Benet: It's the English language tower. Now I am here; in the future I want to be here.

#### **4.2.6. Theme 6: That which is deep and difficult**

Being difficult and deep is a theme that features in the students' perceptions of both what it is to be critical and what the role of the university is. Both the university and being critical are associated with that which is deep and difficult, according to my students. Benjamin says that being critical is 'going deeper' and 'something that is difficult to understand'; and Alfie refers to being critical as 'finding the deep'. And when reflecting on the role of the university some students say that the university is a place 'to learn practical, deeper and useful knowledge that can be applicable in the real world'.

### **4.3. Summary**

In this chapter a description and conventional thematic analysis of the first of three teaching-research phases was presented. The aim of this analysis was to identify what themes emerged before imposing any theoretical concepts. First, a description of the practice was presented which included an overview of the course; a description of the actual practice week by week; and the themes emerging in the lecturer-researcher's diary exclusively, which include my discontent with pre-packaged material, my concern not to impose a research burden, and my focus on understanding criticality. Second, six themes emerging from both my diary and the students' perspectives on the experience were developed with examples. The first theme, (1) *Contentment with learner-centred practice*, encompassed Setting up one's own homework and evaluating each other's work; Positive feelings about a relaxing atmosphere; Valuing instrumental benefits of an autonomous educational experience; Considering students' needs, interests and aspirations; Reflecting is being in charge of one's own learning; and Positive feelings about a learner-centred class. The second theme was (2) *Developing awareness of self*. The third theme, (3) *Developing sociological and cultural awareness*, included the following features: Questioning a people's attitude or disposition; Trying to understand a different societal and cultural context; Identifying one's own societal and cultural habits; Resisting a perceived imposition of foreign values; Resisting what is perceived as a threat; Starting to question my beliefs in the efficacy and appropriateness of a learner-centred pedagogy; and Views of the role of the university reveal sociological awareness of

own context. The fourth theme, (4) *Sharing and communicating articulated understanding with others*, encompassed Developing one's own views by working with others: individual and communal development; Requesting articulated understanding; My students and I both think that criticality relates to a multitude of voices; Doing art is an exciting way of expressing and explaining one's thoughts; Reflecting is talking about one's learning issues; and Learning is a social activity. The fifth theme, (5) *Drive to learn and become better*, refers to Improving my practice; Reflecting helps us improve; and Drive to learn; and the sixth theme was (6) *That which is deep and difficult*. In the next chapter a content analysis of the second phase of my own teaching practice will be presented.

## **Chapter Five: Phase Two: ELT/EAP Programme for visiting student teachers from China (UK)**

### **5.1. Description of Practice**

Right after the first phase of the exploration into and promotion of criticality in a pre-sessional course offered by a British university in China, I came back to the UK and started the second phase of the exploration while teaching another English language course at another British university in the same city. This was a four-week English Language and Teaching Development Programme for Chinese students who were doing a teacher training course at different universities in the Jiangsu Province in China.

It was a four-week, twenty-hour-per-week course with three-hour morning sessions daily, and two-hour afternoon sessions twice a week. The aim of the course was to develop the students' academic language, teaching, research and intercultural competences, and students were required to complete a research project of their own choice in groups by the end of the course. Several teachers were involved in teaching different aspects of this programme according to their expertise and availability and we would all help with different parts of the students' research projects. I was involved in teaching this programme for three of the four weeks due to my unavailability during the last week of this programme. There were thirty-five students, most of whom were studying to be teachers of English though some of them were to teach other subjects. Two groups of 17 and 18 students each were formed and lecturers would deliver the same lesson to each group.

Below, a description of the week-by-week syllabus as organised by the course leaders will be presented, by listing firstly the sessions I taught and secondly the sessions delivered by other lecturers (A schematic view of the syllabus can be found in Appendix 5). Subsequently an explanation of how each syllabus item was actually realised in my own practice will be developed.

In the first week in the morning I taught four lessons to each group of students, which were entitled: Welcome to Britain; Introduction to Academic Writing: Writing a Questionnaire; Introduction to Research; and Aspects of the British Culture. In the

afternoon, I delivered another session to each cohort on Aspects of the British culture; one afternoon was devoted to a half-day trip and another one to a tour of the university campus. In week one other sessions delivered by other lecturers included: a Welcome Introduction; Preparation for Cultural Visits; Introduction to Project Work; Education Technology; an Independent Research Task; and A Quiz about Living in the UK. In the afternoon A Guest Lecture on Testing was offered and students were expected to complete a Questionnaire Task as independent study.

In the second week, I delivered four morning sessions for each group on: Academic English Skills: Listening; two sessions on Academic Writing Skills: Report Writing; and one session on Aspects of the British Culture. In the afternoon I delivered another session on Aspects of the British Culture. Other sessions delivered by other lecturers included: Communication Skills: Functional and Social English; Project Work; an Independent Research Task; Integrated Skills; Advertising in the UK: Language of Advertising; and Festivals in the UK. In the afternoon, a session was offered on Aspects of the British Culture; two sessions were dedicated to Independent Study and one afternoon was dedicated to a cultural visit.

In week three I delivered three sessions in the morning, two of them on Communication Skills; and one session on Academic English Skills: Listening to Lectures and Discussion Skills. In the afternoon, I accompanied students to a cultural visit. Other sessions delivered by other lecturers included: two sessions on Shakespeare Unlocked: Using the Voice; two sessions on The Canon of English Literature; one session on Integrated Skills; and one session on Academic English Skills: Listening to Lectures and Discussion. In the afternoon two sessions were devoted to Independent Study for the project presentation; one session to Presentation Skills; and one session to A Guest Lecture on British Architecture.

During the last week of the course, when I was not available, there were two morning sessions dedicated to Integrated Skills; and two morning sessions dedicated to Independent Study in preparation to their final presentations. Besides, there was one Guest Lecture on English for Young Learners; and the Final Project Presentations. In the afternoon there was a Lecture on Student Life at the University and course reflections and a final cultural visit.

After an overview of the course has been presented, an explanation of how I developed each lesson I was responsible for will be given below.

#### 5.1.1 Week One: 21 - 25 July 2014

In the first week I delivered the following sessions: Welcome to Britain; Introduction to Academic Writing: Writing a Questionnaire; Introduction to Research; and Aspects of the British Culture. Regarding Welcome to Britain, and Aspects of the British Culture, two essays on opposing views about a current British issue - whether to build a second high speed train was desirable - were handed out for the students to read and discuss. Subsequently, they were asked to write a summary of it and in turn an essay. By doing this, both lessons, the one on a British current issue and the one on academic writing were developed at the same time. Regarding Introduction to Research, firstly students were asked to discuss what is research according to their own previous knowledge. In groups they were asked to discuss four questions regarding the nature, purpose, and benefits of research, and the actors involved in it. Subsequently, they had to share their views with the rest of the class via a poster presentation of their ideas, including questions, comments and doubts that might have arisen out of their discussions. Secondly, students were introduced to practitioner research, especially to action research and exploratory practice. On this occasion two texts were provided which students had to read and discuss before sharing their views and comments with the rest of the class via poster presentations. Out of these discussions very interesting questions regarding doing research in China and other issues in the students' own context arose which I thought could be explored more deeply by the students as part of the lesson on Aspects of the Culture, on this occasion, the students' culture. Thus in the subsequent lesson I provided students with two options which consisted of exploring either a British current issue, or the question that had arisen from the discussions on research, 'Why do students in China have so many lessons in Junior High School and High School despite their thinking that this is unhealthy? Unanimously, they chose the latter as part of which in groups they talked about it and shared their insights with the other groups via poster presentations. These discussions generated further questions about whether the same happened in the UK, which was incorporated into the second week, as will be shown subsequently.

As part of this teaching and research experience I was trying to understand and promote criticality. First, I suspected that by deploying a pedagogy for autonomy and by being guided by the principles of exploratory practice, I was at the same time promoting criticality. As indicated above, the students were given options of topics to explore; their interests were taken on board and included in the syllabus; and instead of being lectured about content, students were provided with questions for them to think and discuss in groups and were encouraged to raise further questions, doubts and make comments. These are characteristics of both learner-centred practices, and exploratory practice which promotes both the students' explorations of their own questions, and working together for personal and mutual understanding, among others. Secondly, I suspected that another way of promoting criticality was by incorporating practitioner research in the syllabus, as this is a rather marginal though teacher-relevant way of doing research. Involving students in discussing this kind of research was radical or related to criticality in two ways: since it is a research practice conducted by the practitioner, it questions the status quo, that is, the supremacy of traditional research conducted by a third party, and at the same time it is empowering for these students who are about to become teachers, by providing them with tools to be in charge of and have a say about their own teaching practice.

#### 5.1.2 Week Two: 28 July - 1 August 2014

In the second week, I delivered lessons on: Academic English Skills: Listening; two sessions on Academic Writing Skills: Report Writing; and one session on Aspects of the British Culture; and in the afternoon I delivered another session on Aspects of the British Culture. Taking into account the students' questions that had arisen the previous week about the education system in the UK, I included this topic as part of both the Listening lesson and the Aspects of the British Culture lesson in the second week. I created material based on the students' questions about the British education system that had arisen the previous week. The material consisted of an interview with a British colleague of mine on my students' questions about the British education system. I also invited my colleague to visit us and talk to my students face to face after my students had done and discussed the listening task. Before doing the listening task, I asked them to discuss two questions about doing a listening task and to share their views with the class. Since they are mostly language teachers to be I

thought that such discussion was appropriate to raise their awareness of the importance of thinking about the nature, function, usefulness and value of doing listening tasks. Below are the two pre-listening questions I suggested they could discuss:

#### Extract 35

When listening to people talk in English what is important to pay attention to in order to understand them?

What exercises can we think of are good to learn from this recording?

(Diary entry: Monday 28<sup>th</sup> July 2014)

During the guest speaker session, each group of students in cohort A asked her the following questions:

#### Extract 36

- What do you mean when you say we should assert more freedom to children? Should we give them total freedom like the American style of freedom without much self-discipline? You don't think British people are free because you are a little bit conservative sometimes. What is your view of freedom? (Gayle)

- For students between 11-16, their education is teacher-centred, more teaching and students take notes. But for students between 16-18, their education is student-centred. How do these students get used to this switch? (Fatima)

- Is there a conception in Britain that the university education is not as useful and valuable as it was? What attitude do parents in Britain hold toward the children who decide to drop out of school? (Estela)

- What is the situation about politics in English education? Do students in British schools care about politics? How about the political control in education? Are students critical? (Imogen)

(Diary entry: Monday 28<sup>th</sup> July 2014)

All in all it was a very successful and active session, after which the students showed interest in me telling them about the education system in Argentina where I am from. This shows how inquisitive and enthusiastic about learning they were. After I had shared my experience and knowledge of it briefly, each group synthesised what they had learned about education, including further questions, and shared it with everyone in the class. This was mostly done via poster presentations and one group via a magazine, which among others, included questions related to freedom and control in

education and life, and the transition from a teacher-centred to a learner-centred pedagogy. Below is an excerpt from my diary that shows that I felt students were exercising their curiosity and starting to become used to developing further questions based on what they had learned:

#### Extract 37

I was telling Sophie [our guest speaker] after the class that what was surprising is that even though I have not asked them to come up with 'why' questions they are doing it spontaneously. Sophie really liked my teaching and research style – very flexible.

Students in Cohort B showed less enthusiasm for continuing working on the topic of education after doing the listening task. Thus in this case, I provided them with the option of investigating either an aspect of the British culture of their choice or a specific question that had arisen from the discussions on education. While one group chose the latter, the three remaining groups decided to learn about British table manners, British food, and the British flag.

Finally, in the Report Writing lesson, students were guided in the report writing process and started writing their reports in class. As was indicated at the beginning of this section other lecturers teaching in this programme had already provided lessons on the previous research stages of selecting a research question, collecting data and analysing it. At the end of the second week I asked one group of students who had finished their work earlier to reflect on the learning experience through painting and drawing. After doing this, the drawings were hung on the walls and there was some time left for them to move around the classroom and talk about their drawings or ask each other questions about their drawings, informally.

Again encouraging students to ask their own questions and explore them further in groups; to think about their own and the new culture, to participate actively in discussions, to reflect on their learning, and to do so via art, were, as I saw it at the time, conducive to criticality, apart from being conducive to autonomy and integral to exploratory practice.

### 5.1.3 Week Three: 4-8 August 2014

In week three, I delivered two sessions on Communication Skills, and one session on Academic English Skills: Listening to Lectures and Discussion Skills, to each cohort. Regarding the former, I provided students with topic options to be explored and discussed as a means to, among others, developing their communication skills. The main three topic options I suggested were democracy, the university, and autonomy. I thought that these overarching topics were somehow related to meanings of criticality and would therefore promote criticality. Cohort A chose to explore questions related to democracy, the university and life issues arising from their current experience in the UK, in particular staying in a British home. The latter was an issue a student was facing and needed to think about and discuss with her peers in class. Below are their questions:

#### Extract 38

What is a democratic university? What are the implications of a democratic national system in the university classroom? (Ida, Yasmin, Estela, Jackie)

What is the university? (Emma, Hilary, Gayle, Delphine)

How to get along well with our British family members? (Beatriz, Fatima, Florence, Carla)

Should the university be a public or a marketized place? (Deborah, Imogen, Gemma, Ceasar, Claire)

(Diary entry on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> August 2014)

Cohort B chose questions related to teacher and learner autonomy, democracy and the importance of asking questions. The latter arose out of a group of students' interest in philosophy, which they had expressed to me previously. In response to their interest, I brought copies of a philosophy book chapter on the importance of asking questions and they were enthusiastic about reading it and sharing their learning and insights with the rest of the class. Again, I suggested this specific philosophy chapter on the importance of asking questions because I thought it was related to meanings of criticality, autonomy and exploratory practice, and my intention, aligned with one of the aims of the Western university (Davies & Barnett, 2015), was to promote and understand criticality development. Below are the topics they chose and explored:

#### Extract 39

- Learner autonomy and technology
  - Learner autonomy (Lauren et al.)
  - Chinese democracy (Kaila, Julian, Pamela, Zoe)
  - Teacher autonomy (Ramona)
  - The man who didn't ask any questions: Eichmann (Peter, Martha, Odette)
- (Diary entry on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> August 2014)

Regarding the latter session, that is, Listening to Lectures and Discussion Skills, I suggested that students investigate and discuss those aspects of the British and Chinese cultures that they were interested in and had not had time to explore the previous weeks. Even though the focus of this lesson was not on listening to lectures, it was on investigating topics of the students' interests and on engaging students in whole-class discussions of topics which were relevant to them all. Cohort A explored the following topics:

#### Extract 40

The ideal Chinese family  
Bathroom rules; House-talk rules; Money talk; and Improvement talk  
Traditional and DINK (Dual Income No Kids) families  
Travelling in the UK  
(Diary entry on 8<sup>th</sup> August 2014)

Cohort B explored the topics listed below:

#### Extract 41

Marriage in China and in the UK  
Chinese medicine vs Western medicine  
British vs Chinese politeness  
The lifestyle of the old  
Exhibitions of Chinese food across China  
Social class codes  
British humour  
Transport rules in the UK  
Home rules: Do-It-Yourself (Olga)  
(Diary entry on 8<sup>th</sup> August 2014)

All in all, I thought that the content, pedagogy, and research design chosen would be conducive to developing criticality. In the next section, a thematic analysis of the data, which consists of my own and my students' perceptions of the learning experience will be presented, which will contribute to a more comprehensive and thorough understanding of the teaching, learning and researching experience. This analysis will allow me to answer my research questions on solid and reliable grounds, as will be seen in Chapter Seven.

## **5.2. Thematic Analysis**

In this second teaching phase the following five data sets were collected and thematically analysed: 18 student reflections via drawings; 34 (24 small and 10 big) student posters of work done in class; 9 weekly written reflections from 4 students on their learning via email; 14 pages of the teacher/ researcher diary and one extra page of a transcribed voice-recorded entry; and 19 pages of notes, and transcriptions of, 7 video-recorded lesson parts of a total of 2 hours and 19 minutes. The following 9 themes emerged: 1) Embracing a student-centred pedagogy: a new and different way of doing things; 2) Homogeneous view of social behaviour: Identifying and developing understanding of implicit social norms in both own and foreign society; 3) Engaging participants' experiential, previous, everyday knowledge; 4) Resisting the new as well as own way of doing things; 5) Positive attitude to articulating and formalising thought; 6) Enlarging, expanding understanding of both the social and the individual; 7) Thirst for change and improvement; 8) Working with others; and 9) Working with sources. Below each theme will be presented with examples from all the data types.

### **5.2.1. Theme 1: Embracing a student-centred pedagogy: a new and different way of doing things**

One salient theme across all data types is *embracing a student-centred pedagogy*; in other words, students have a positive attitude towards taking responsibility over their own learning process, participating and having a say in different aspects of the educative enterprise.

Below is a student's drawing of her classroom experience. This visual piece of data includes both text and images. While I acknowledge the invaluable insights that interpreting the images can bring about, this analysis will mainly focus on the text, and will leave the imagery to speak to each viewer in different ways. In her reflective drawing there are references to the insights gained from researching the British education system, listening to an interview and discussing the topic with the interviewee/guest speaker in class. Her notes read 'more relaxed, more time to do independent study, more time to discover the world'. These words reflect a positive attitude towards learner-centred practice. She also points out that she has learned to be cautious with words when writing an academic report. She expresses contentment with having time and space in class 'to have a voice', 'more opportunities to talk about something they are interested in'. Engaging the students' voices and interests is another feature of a learner-centred practice.

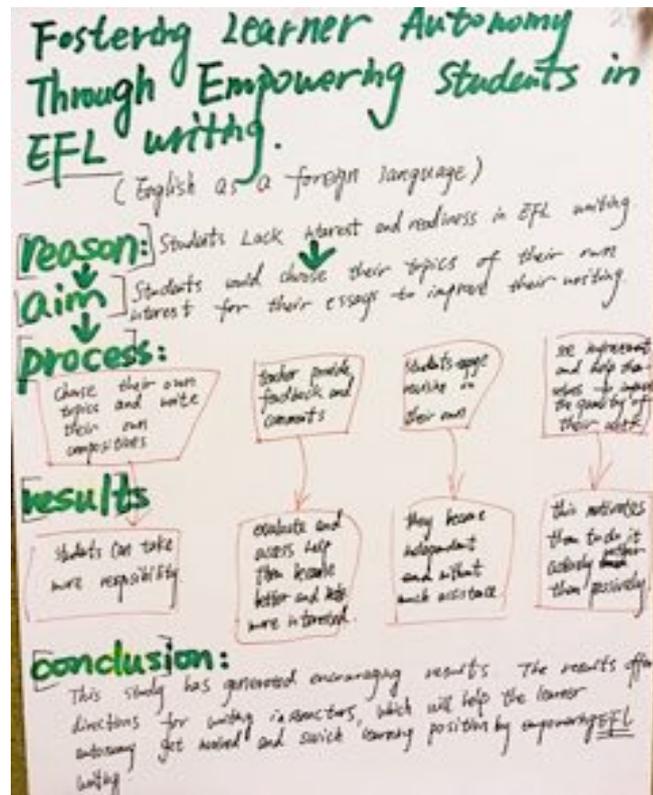
Drawing 17



The poster below reveals the students' positive attitude towards a learner-centred pedagogy as they chose to discuss whether this practice could also work in China and the possibility of it being a solution to English as a Foreign Language writing lessons in China which are, in their eyes, unsuccessful due to their being teacher-

centred. They devised a plan of action for teachers and students in these classes. Moreover, this poster also reveals their being autonomous students as they chose what to focus on related to autonomy, and to think of and devise a research plan to address the lack of student engagement in the EFL writing lessons in China. Also making sense of the content by linking it with their own previous knowledge, experience and context is also an autonomous act.

Poster 1



Below is an excerpt of a student's written reflection in which she describes current learner-centred practice and contrasts it with a more teacher-centred practice in China. Some of the features she includes in her description of the former are the students being in charge, and free to move, discuss and debate not only with other peers but also with teachers. There is an implication that in her context the teacher's views are unquestionable. She explicitly mentions her valuing a learner-centred practice:

#### Extract 42

Meanwhile, I have compared the pedagogy activities between east and west. We are the masters of class here, we are free to move and discuss and share with others, or debate with other students, even the teachers. While in our Chinese classes, we are told to remember knowledge, theories in books. There's less communication and discussion in class, but more listening and memorizing. I regard the former way active, the latter passive. And I appreciate the open-minded pedagogy activities. (Lauren, reflection, week 1)

Below is an excerpt from a transcription of a video-recorded student presentation on issues arising from their staying at a British family home. First, Fatima passionately and quite articulately presents her group work and asks the audience for their views on the issues she presents. Then different participants respond and share their own experiences. It is worth noting that the lecturer does not guide their interactions; it is them who are in charge. They all seem happy about having had the chance to think about their own home-stay issues in class and to be sharing them with their classmates and eliciting their views and experiences. They have not only selected the research question or topic to be explored but also they are involving the audience and managing the discussion by themselves. These are features of learner-centred practice which they seem very comfortable with and positive about. Allowing students to choose what to investigate in the classroom, to discuss it and share it with the rest of the class is indicative of a learner-centred practice. Students are passionate and engaged in the educative enterprise because the subjects investigated have relevance in their lives. Students practise their speaking skills, ask questions to each other and express their views in the target language naturally and seriously, out of engagement and interest:

#### Extract 43

Fatima: [We have had] some homestay ... problems ... and today we want to discuss with all of you to find some solutions, how to deal with our problems. As we can see, the first one, what topics should we avoid talking. We live in different countries, and different countries have things we cannot mention. So we want to ask you if you know what topic we should not talk about. The second one ... after dinner we have lots of time to stay with our homestay, we want to know what interesting topics we can talk about with them. The third one is how to tell them our requirements. I think we might have some problems, but I think ... I think we Chinese are not good at complaining at things; just accept them. But it is not good in the UK. We should say something to our homestay, right? The fourth one is if we need to share things with them; I think this is a

hard question, because we must go shopping and buy some fruits or snacks, should we share it with them, put it on the table and say ‘let’s enjoy it together’? But I think it’s hard to say it. I wonder whether they will accept it or... that’s the question. We want to talk with all of you and solve these questions. And the last one, the important one is the Chinese family culture and the English family culture. Yesterday I found a problem that my homestay asked me if you want something or what to do something they ask once. If I [say no] they will never ask again. And maybe the Chinese will ask you again and again. Do you want something? ... In our mind, we want to accept it but they didn’t ask again. (Everybody laughs)

Another student: They asked me if I wanted ice-cream and I said no. They said ‘are you sure?’

(Everybody laughs)

Fatima: Do you have any ideas?

Imogen: Maybe when they ask, you should say yes.

(Everybody laughs)

Fatima: But I think it’s hard for Chinese ...

Deborah: I have a question. Yesterday afternoon I stayed alone in my room for the whole afternoon ...

Another student: I think you can ...

Source: video 2

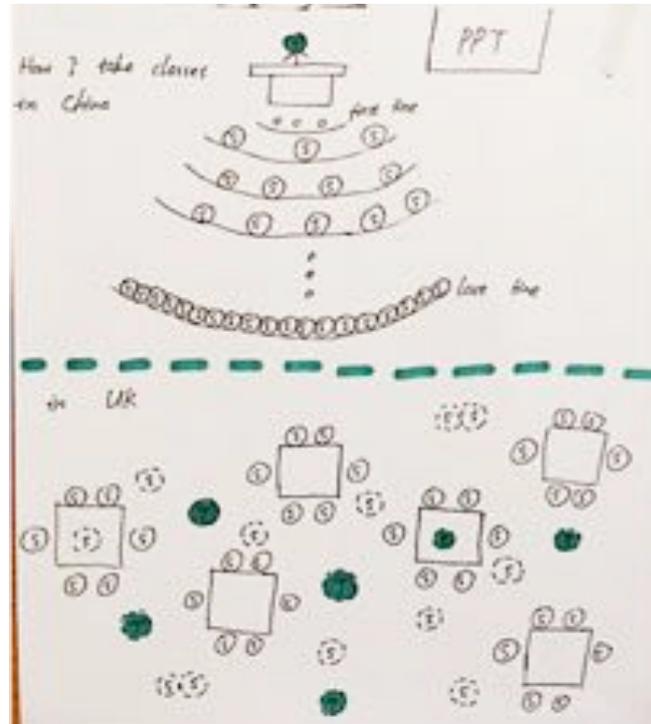
### **5.2.2. Theme 2: Homogeneous view of social behaviour: Identifying and developing understanding of implicit social norms in both own and foreign society**

Another salient theme across the data types is identifying and developing an understanding of the implicit rules and norms of social behaviour in the participants’ own society and the foreign society they are visiting.

In her reflective drawing below, Mary compares the way classes are set up in China and in the UK. In the drawing in the Chinese context the teacher is lecturing at the front and the students are sitting in rows – whereby the first as well as the further away rows are empty; the last one is crammed with students; and the second to the fourth rows sit some students. Conversely, in the British class, the teacher circulates around groups of students who are working autonomously. At times the teacher interacts with a student who is walking around, at other times she is close to two classmates who are interacting while standing; at other times, she appears to be talking to all members of one group and some other times she is observing how groups work by walking around. Similarly, the students are moving in the class, visiting other groups, and discussing in and outside of their group. This drawing

depicts her noticing two different ways of teaching and learning in the Chinese context where she comes from and the British context where she is currently.

Drawing 18



Below is a reproduction of a poster created by a group of students about issues and characteristics or common knowledge statements about their education system:

Poster 2

1. Large population, not enough opportunities to enter universities;
2. Education department: the college entrance examination. We have only one chance: pressure
3. In China competition has been a common social atmosphere; comparing good grades with great ability is common sense
4. The government have tried their best to improve education, but it still will take time.

Statements 1 and 4 from the poster above are presented as facts, common knowledge statements about their education system. It is common to hear these participants say that because China is a big country, not everyone in their society can access university, as if this was an unquestionable fact; or that the government has done its

best to improve the education system and that time is needed to see further changes and improvement. As an outsider, it seems easier for me to notice that these statements could be challenged. When confronted with difference it seems easier to notice such statements. When one is immersed in one's own societal discourse, it might be harder to notice and question statements that are presented as facts. This group of students has identified characteristics of their education system and it would then be the role of everyone in the classroom to question the statements which have been presented as facts. Freire (2011) warns educators and students of the dangers of accepting clichés as if they were true and of the imperative of questioning them, as they often help perpetuate injustice and inequality.

Below are two excerpts from two students' reflective writing which depict both awareness of teaching and learning differences between their own context and the new context; and a contrast between making generalizable and more attenuated statements:

Extract 44

I have compared the pedagogical activities between east and west. We are the masters of class here, we are free to move and discuss and share with others, or debate with other students, even the teachers. (Lauren, written reflections, p. 1)

Extract 45

Your teaching method is quite different from what in my school, and the classroom atmosphere is quite wonderful. (Fatima, written reflections, p. 2)

In the first excerpt Lauren refers to the new teaching method as characteristic of the West, whereas Fatima, in the second excerpt, refers to the new teaching style as the teacher's. Even though making generalisations was a common and consistent theme, the latter example shows that some participants were more precise and specific with words and acknowledged the situatedness of this practice and the specificity of situations.

Below is an excerpt from my own diary, which shows the students' curiosity about what the education system is like in my own context in Argentina, which reflects awareness that different societies organise their education systems in this case in different ways:

#### Extract 46

In the afternoon group 'A' worked on the topic of education in Britain. We invited Sophie to answer questions each group prepared for her for half an hour. After she left, the students asked me questions about my educational experience and background in Argentina. (Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> July)

The students were curious about whether in Britain or Argentina students face the same difficulties and issues as they do in China or whether those contexts face other issues. This excerpt also reveals assumptions that societies work in a homogenous way and that its citizens conform to implicitly accepted social rules.

The excerpt below is a transcription of a video-recorded conversation between a group of students and the lecturer about the topic they are exploring, namely, the traditional Chinese family. This data reveals the students' awareness of what is acceptable behaviour and what is less acceptable in both their own culture and the new culture, in their view:

#### Extract 47

Emma: Most Chinese people will have a family burden, but for most of them it's a sweet burden. We are willing to take care of our parents ...

Gayle: What if I think it is not a sweet burden? [...] All the people think like this: if you go away, you are not respectful; you are not a good girl; you will face difficult conditions.

I: But I think it's the same in all cultures. There are certain rules in all cultures but people break the rules and say I want to live my life, and I wonder if people do that in China.

Gayle: Most grown-ups think they have no choice and they have to obey the tradition.

Emma: In England, here, most parents will let them go away and do their lives, but in China most parents will live with us when we grow up.

The excerpt above shows the students' awareness of their traditions and common social behaviour. At the same time, they seem to apply the same reasoning to understanding the British culture and society by saying that most parents in Britain will let their children lead their own independent lives. They perceive that Chinese people are less autonomous in leading their lives than people in other societies; and that they have a more communal lifestyle.

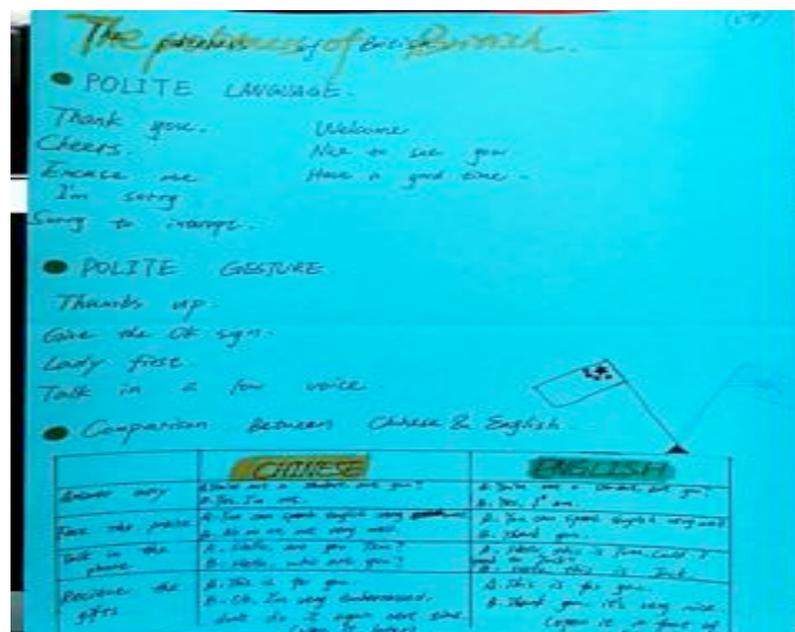
### 5.2.3. Theme 3: Engaging participants' experiential, previous, everyday knowledge

During this programme students were encouraged to investigate issues and topics relating to their own interest. Most of the questions the students decided to investigate arose from their new lived experiences in the UK. Noticing differences between their own and the new context, they were curious about why there were differences and enquiring them more deeply first by engaging with their own knowledge and experience of the topic and then by using sources. This theme focuses on their engaging with their experiential, previous and everyday knowledge.

Below is an example of an exploration into their lived experience and knowledge of politeness both in the UK and in China. Engaging with what they already know about a subject of their own interest is a first step into identifying gaps and therefore more specific research questions. Besides, participants learn from each other and are usually surprised to discover that others share the same questions. In this process, their assumptions become exposed and open to be challenged. It is also when engaged in investigating topics of their own choice that participants use the target language authentically, naturally and meaningfully. By working in groups they help each other in the process of making meaning and articulating their thoughts.

The poster shows polite language and gestures that they have identified as typical in this context, and a comparison of politeness in specific situations they have experienced in both contexts.

Poster 3



Below is an excerpt from a student's reflecting writing in which she reflects on their being 'master[s of] the knowledge' in the new context, by engaging their own previous knowledge in discussions with their peers. She continues to say that by doing this they realise how little they know, and what it is that they need to enquire more about to have a better understanding of the subject:

#### Extract 48

I realise now in the UK we master the knowledge and communicate, evaluate and record the emotional attitude and values through our own table, two people or the group cooperative learning method, which is used in the UK. The more we discussed, the more we found we don't know. (Fatima, 3<sup>rd</sup> August, 2014, end of week 2)

The excerpt below is from Deborah's reflective writing, in which she compares how lessons are structured in her own and the new context. In doing so, she expresses a positive attitude towards the latter, which enables them to think, discuss and share their own ideas with others in the classroom. Working with their own ideas is synonymous with engaging with their knowledge and imagination:

#### Extract 49

This week at the first class we learned what research is. We all separated in four groups to have discussion, then we wrote our ideas on the paper, then we presented our ideas in front of other classmates. That is definitely different from the class in China. In China we only listen to what the teacher told us and read textbooks. We seldom actually think and discussion by ourselves. And then we read [...]. (Deborah, end of week 1)

Below is an excerpt from my own diary that shows my asking students to discuss four specific questions related to the subject matter from their own knowledge and experience. It also shows my encouraging them to include comments, doubts and questions in the presentation of their discussions. Exposing their doubts and questions based on what they already know and have experienced was a way of opening up new routes of enquiry and pushing their thinking further:

#### Extract 50

In the next two sessions I suggested working on research because that was actually the given topic to this session. Since most of these students are training to be teachers of English I thought it would be very appropriate for them to discuss this. At the same time this is one of the topics of my own research. I asked them to discuss four questions regarding the nature,

purpose, and benefit of research as well as who are involved in it in small groups. They had to write down their answers in a poster, which they stuck on the wall and explained to the whole class later on. This sparked the discussion further and the atmosphere was nice. In the second session on research, I introduced EP and AR and gave them a photocopy [...] (Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> and Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> July, 2014)

Finally, another piece of data that reflects this theme is a transcription of a voice recorded group discussion about research. Collaboratively students construct a definition of research by taking turns to voice what they know about research. They build on each other's contribution, try to understand each other by asking for clarification, and help each other to find the right words to express themselves. As they speak they are writing their ideas down:

#### Extract 51

Imogen: What is research? I think it is choose a project, collect data, write something, doing lots of things and finally write a paper about it; finally, analyse your final results about this research, and apply it.

Deborah: I think it's also finding problems while you are in this area and try to fix it

Another student: and find some phenomena

Imogen: yes it can be phenomena, can be a problem, different projects

Another student: so we should choose a topic and then collect some information in the data about this project

Everyone: and analyse it and make ...

Cesar: so how to make it ... maybe we need a big paper (setting up blank poster on table). First,

Everyone: first, ... 'project' (dictating to the person who is writing the words in flipchart paper)

Another student: second, collect information

Imogen: yes, collect data, all the data about it

Another student: Should we assign some assignment to different people, different kinds of group members? I mean each group member should be assigned some homework

Imogen: you mean during the research different people had different but we have arrived ... specific

Deborah: but I think with the data we might find some problems, some phenomena that is not suitable for the topic; maybe we'd need

Imogen: to exclude the irrelevant information

Other students: Yes

Imogen: analyse

Everyone: analyse the data

Imogen: analyse all the useful resources

Another student: and how about the phenomena? Should we focus on the phenomena?

Imogen: what kind of phenomena? You mean from the information we see something. Just let it as 'useful things' I guess.

Another student: so the fourth is 'analyse' the data

Imogen: final rules,

Another student: conclude

Imogen: final clues and write a paper

#### **5.2.4. Theme 4: Resisting aspects of own and foreign classroom practice**

Another theme that has emerged in the data as a whole is the students' resistance to aspects of both their own education practice and the new classroom practice.

In the excerpt below from my own diary I refer to a student's resistance to an aspect of the foreign classroom practice, namely, extending classwork over more than one lesson. In dialogue with the lecturer in the class, she expresses her preferring working on different topics every lesson in the manner she is used to. When I respond that the reason for doing this is to allow them time to explore issues more deeply, she says that perhaps in her context they do not do that:

##### **Extract 52**

Twenty minutes before the end of the session I asked them whether they wanted to use the remaining time to finish their work or whether they wanted to share their work and these two groups especially and quite loudly said they wanted to finish this today. After some thought I seriously told them that it was impossible actually for each group to present all their work in five minutes and that there was only time for the group who worked on 'education' to present. These two groups explained to me that they are used to starting and finishing tasks in one session. That is why they feel reluctant to extend the exploration of a certain topic over two or more sessions. I said that it is hard to explore anything deeply in one session, and some of them suggested by their facial expressions that in their context maybe they do not go deep enough into any topics. (The lecturer's diary, Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> July 2014)

The excerpt below is a transcription of a video-recorded presentation done by a group of students on what is a democratic university. This is an example of resistance to aspects of their own education system. Estela first talks about the

current Chinese university, critiquing different aspects of it, and then puts forward the democratic university they would aspire to:

#### Extract 53

Estela: what is a democratic university? When it comes to this topic our group divided it into two parts. The first one is about the current situation in China and the next part is about our ideal democratic university. So now I want to give a brief introduction about the current university system which you have been very familiar with. It contains three parts: life, study and work. When it comes to the life in dormitory, I think we have too much restrictions. For example, the arrival time is fixed and some restrictions are really unreasonable. For example, in our school after

I: Sorry, can I interrupt? We won't have time for examples. Simply say 'we are going to talk about this. Come and ask us questions' ...

Estela: OK... don't arrive until certain time; too much restrictions and less freedom. Study, I think limited study resources and authority is very obvious in university. When it comes to work, [?] and some interference are very obvious. We have too much right to taught. And sometimes our voice will be neglected. So that is the current situation.

I: so it's just an invitation for people to come ...

Estela: well, based on the current situation, we make an outcome about our ideal university system. The key point is we want more freedom and we want more private space and flexible timetable. Concluding all the aspects through examples. (Estela, video 2)

#### **5.2.5. Theme 5: Positive attitude to articulating and formalising thought**

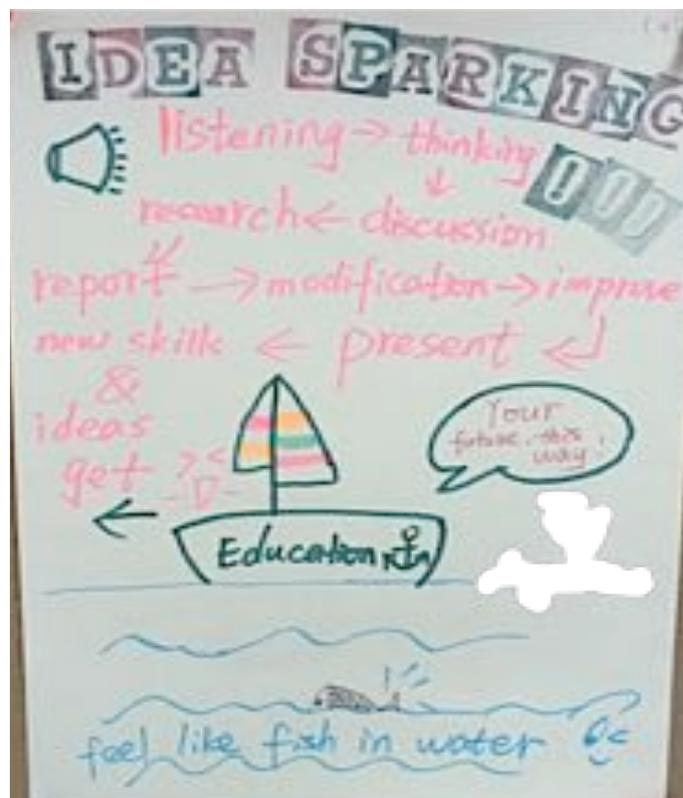
Articulating and formalising thought is a characteristic of this educative practice, which has been encouraged by me, the lecturer, as will be shown in an excerpt from my diary. At the same time, this feature has emerged as a theme from an analysis of the students' perceptions of this practice. Below are two examples of the students' positive attitude towards verbalising and formalising their thoughts. The last example has been taken from my diary to show how it was my purpose to make students articulate and formalise their thoughts.

The drawing below depicts a sequence of related tasks done in a lesson as encompassing: 'listening', 'thinking', 'discussion', 'research', 'report', 'modifications', 'improve', 'present', 'new skills and ideas'. In other words, this ordered sequence involved doing a listening task; thinking about related listening tasks as prospective teachers and about aspects of the content in the listening that they would like to explore further; discussing their thoughts and ideas with other

classmates; exploring a related question more deeply; writing a report of it; modifying it according to received feedback; improving it further; and sharing their new insights with the rest of the class. This drawing highlights an organic movement in the learning process, which involves articulating and formalising thought as realised in most of the steps listed in the drawing. The steps that presuppose the articulation and formalisation of thought are: discussing, report writing, and presenting thoughts and insights.

This drawing also shows a boat called 'education' that moves to the future. There are fish in the sea and a message reads 'feel like fish in water'. This phrase is reminiscent of the cyclical development of learning mentioned before. Learning in this cyclical way is reminiscent of the natural development of life and movement of water. In other words, following these steps seems to be organic following the natural movement of thought development, of the research and of the understanding process.

Drawing 19



In other words, many of the learning stages mentioned in this drawing involve articulating and formalising thought. Perhaps articulating thought is more evidently realised in the discussion stage in which students verbalise their thoughts. Formalising thought seems to involve a more careful recorded account of developed thought. Examples of this as shown in the drawing are the students' written reports and their oral presentations. What is important to say is that both involve drafting and re-drafting and perhaps in the course of the programme students have time to get feedback on several drafts of one report. Regarding the students' poster presentations, they can be considered final drafts if there is no further discussion of those ideas later on in class; or in-progress, bits of formalisations of thought, if these will continue being developed into more refined versions that take comments and questions from the presentation into account. Langan (1966) argues that any formalisation of thought, regardless of its potential for refinement into more accurate and complete versions, is important in that it is men's legacy on earth. Being able to access the work done in the future opens up possibilities for developing these ideas further. Perhaps this is the reason why I consistently ask my students to articulate and formalise their thoughts.

The following excerpt from a student's reflective writing shows the importance she attributed to verbalising and articulating her thoughts. She highlights having opportunities to think, share and develop their own ideas as gains from this learning experience. She further expresses the value of articulating and verbalising thought in phrases such as, 'discussions in class', 'developing my oral skills and elaborative faculty', 'opportunities to think and speak', and 'expressing my views and sharing them with others':

#### Extract 54

Actually, in my school we do not need to do that, we just listen and remember, and there is no discussion in class. However in this week, I think I learned a lot and developed my oral language ability and my elaborative faculty. Although my major is English education in my school, but I have few opportunities to speak and think, just to remember and understand, so I feel novel and maybe a bit uncomfortable, but the learning method makes me feel very free, I can express my views, and share them with others. (Fatima, week 1)

The excerpt below is an exchange between a student and I, the lecturer, in which I ask him to express what work he was doing in group, what he would say about the topic and what aspect of it he would choose to share with the rest of the class. Going around the groups and asking them to verbalise what work they have planned to do, how they are going to do it and an evaluation of its quality (Dam, 1995) characterises this teaching practise and has emerged as a recurrent theme. Not only are the students practising their speaking skills in the target language, but they are also developing their understanding as they verbalise their ideas:

#### Extract 55

I: Can I ask you individually what you are going to do?

Julian: I'm going to discuss British politeness.

I: Interesting! Why have you decided on that?

Julian: Because my coming here, wherever I go, I find that British people are very, very polite such as, if I'm getting off the bus, British people have to say 'thank you' to the bus driver; and also if there are people behind you and you want to go, you have to say 'excuse me', or 'sorry', or some polite word.

I: So, what is it that you are going to do in connection with politeness? Are you going to write your ideas? Or...

Julian: Yes, write some phrases they always share, and then some behaviour they always have, and then maybe I will compare it with the Chinese politeness

I: Aw interesting!

Julian: I think they are totally different from each other

I: That'd be great. Are you going to use two different colours?

Julian: Yes

I: Thank you

Julian: Thank you

#### **5.2.6. Theme 6: Enlarging, expanding understanding of both the self and others**

This emergent theme is concerned with expanding one's understanding of both the self and others. More specifically, this refers to critiquing and questioning what is presented as a fact (Freire, 2011), developing one's own voice, seeking 'deep' understanding, presenting one's views in a nuanced way, considering opposing views, and being cautious. In other words, all of the above are ways of opening up possibilities (Martin and White, 2005) in order to reach a more thorough

understanding not only of what they are investigating but also of themselves and others.

In her first-week reflective writing, Estela refers to this expansion of understanding by listening to and being inspired by the views of others:

Extract 56

After exchanging and sharing, we got new inspiration from other groups and expanded our knowledge about this topic. (Estela's reflective writing on week 1)

In her first-week reflective writing, Lauren reflects on taking the best from both this experience and what she has learned in her own context. In other words, she reminds us of the value of expanding our knowledge by adding the new learning to the old one. She speaks of the integration of positive aspects from different educational practices:

Extract 57

The most important thing is that in the future pedagogy activities I will integrate the advantages of Western and Eastern teaching methods to achieve some innovation in education. (Lauren's reflective writing on week 1)

In her reflective writing on the second week, Estela reflects on the dangers of comparing aspects of two cultures without discussing the criteria for comparison. In other words, her identifying the need to consider a criteria for comparison is a step towards advancing understanding by being more specific, more nuanced, less generic and more accurate about their comparative work:

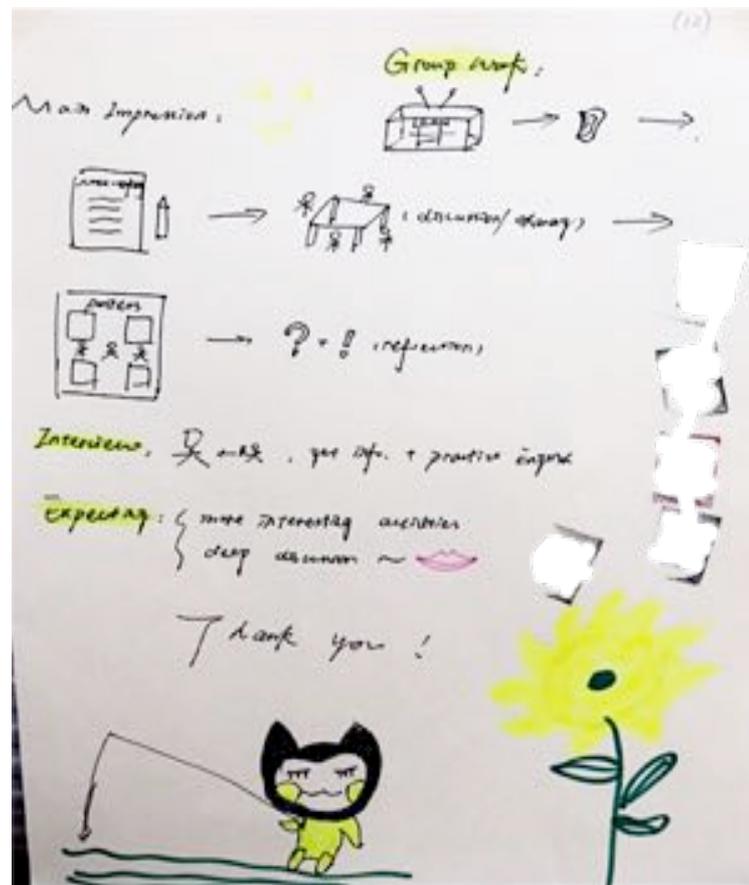
Extract 58

Sometimes we are inclined to compare things from a limited perspective, which means we cannot find a proper standard. Therefore, I think more time should be spent on the perspectives of the comparison. Meanwhile, variety and diversity must be shown in our comparison. Repetition should be avoided as much as possible. (Estela's reflective writing on week 2)

In her visual reflection reproduced below Ramona refers to the work she had done and learnt and what she expects to learn next. Regarding the former, she highlights

group work, discussions, sharing, reflections, and getting information and practising her English via an interview to a guest speaker. Regarding the latter, she highlights wishing to continue having interesting activities and deep discussions. Deep discussions are conducive to thorough and better understanding as they involve the consideration of various perspectives and voices. Deep discussions enlarge understanding.

Drawing 20



The excerpt below is from my own diary, which shows my providing students with time so that they could explore topics in more depth. At the same time this entry shows student resistance to extending the exploration of questions into more than one session. This student makes reference to her preferring working on different topics every class which is what she has been used to:

## Extract 59

These two groups explained to me that they are used to starting and finishing tasks in one session. That is why they feel reluctant to extending the exploration of a certain topic over two or more sessions. I said that it is hard to explore anything deeply in one session, and some of them suggested by their facial expressions that in their context maybe they do not go deep enough into any topics. (Wed, 30<sup>th</sup> July 2014)

In the excerpt below, three students present their work on freedom of expression and democracy in China and different members of the audience engage in expressing their own views about this topic. More than 12 students engaged in this heated debate about freedom of expression in their own country. Even though their views might have been presented in categorical ways, their speaking up their minds is a way of starting to work towards developing a better understanding and advancing knowledge. If views are not put on the table to be considered there is no personal and mutual development in the understanding of ideas:

## Extract 60

Julian / Presenter 3 (to the class): I want to ask you a question. Do you think that the revolutions were a failure? In my opinion we, Chinese people, shouldn't apply all democracy mechanically. We should choose what is appropriate for ourselves [...] I think [...] we chose the right way; [...] And the transformation of our country by the communist party is successful I think.

I: You are presenting demonstrating as something negative. And I think it is a stage that [...]

Julian / Presenter 3: yes, but I think that different countries have different ways of doing ...

Audience 1: I would like to ask a question. I don't think that the revolution [...] is a failure – I think it's a success. It's not a revolution – it's improvement. Just don't mistake – not a failure, I think.

Kaila/ Audience 3: and here is just our opinions, just our opinions. I think [...] The citizens don't have the right to express themselves freely; and [...]

Audience 4: it's just my own opinion, my own. I think there is no full democracy in China; many times we cannot express our true thoughts especially against the government. For example from 1967 to 1977 many people were persecuted. However, it has improved a lot. Now we have some freedom.

Finally, in her reflective writing on week 1, Deborah highlights her realisation that many aspects of life can be turned into questions or issues to be enquired about, and that thinking over them requires patience and depth as one of the gains of the week:

Extract 61

From this week, what impress me most is there are so many things in our life can be researched. You need to think deeper and have patience to dig deeper. I do enjoy the lesson very much. (Deborah's reflective writing on week 1)

In week 3 Deborah continues to reflect on her realisation that anything can be researched. She values having been guided and encouraged to do research, discuss, think deeply and interview a sociologist on the topic of homosexuality which she and her classmates were investigating for the programme's research project. She says that this research methodology will help her in writing her graduation essay in the following semester. In this way, she is relating the research process with investigating issues of her interest by thinking deeply, interviewing, discussing, and with writing an essay. McPeck (1981) argues that writing an essay is the ultimate way of expressing critical thinking by allowing the writer to develop their ideas in depth after a thorough research process. Below is an excerpt from Deborah's third-week reflection:

Extract 62

I really want to say thank you to show me a really different way of teaching; guide me to do some research and let us do free discussion, which we don't have much opportunities to think in China. Also it inspires me that research is everywhere and think deeper. I think this idea will help me thinking when I'm preparing my graduation essay next semester [...] Because of your encouragement, we can had an interview with professor Cath.

### **5.2.7. Theme 7: Thirst for change and improvement**

Another theme that has emerged from an analysis of the students' perceptions is a desire for change and improvement of themselves and their society. Below are three examples of the students' thirst for change and improvement in themselves, their university and teaching methods.

Below is an excerpt from Fatima's reflective writing during week 1 in which she after identifying characteristics of her classmates that she admires she expresses her desire to do as well as they do. More specifically, she refers to the skill of expressing one's ideas fearlessly and fluently in front of others:

Extract 63

Besides I really admire those who can fearlessly and fluently express their ideas in front of us. I hope after four weeks here as I could do as them. (Fatima's reflective writing on week 1)

In a video-recorded presentation of their group work on what is a democratic university, Estela describes the current state of the university in China before introducing their ideal university. In the excerpt below she introduces the changes they would like to see:

Extract 64

Well, based on the current situation, we make an outcome about our ideal university system. The key point is we want more freedom and we want more private space and flexible timetable. (From Estela's presentation, video 2)

Below is an excerpt from Estela's reflective writing which shows her identifying problems in the education system in her context, suggesting what is needed and expressing an urgency to act and make changes:

Extract 65

I also realise that a better and more effective teaching method and a more humanistic value on education are badly needed in today's China. So efforts should be made and we need to do something. (Estela's reflective writing on week 1)

### **5.2.8. Theme 8: Working with others**

Working with others is a current theme across the data. Participants value cooperating and learning from each other, discussing and making meaning together. Below are two examples: a drawing and a transcription of a group discussion.

Several students' drawings illustrate their positive attitude towards working together. In the drawing below by Veronica there are at least two clear references to this

theme. One of them is indicated by the word ‘cooperation’ in the centre of the drawing. She has drawn a shape as a representation of what she has learned as a result of cooperating with her classmates and the lecturer. Another element that illustrates this theme is the drawing of two people conversing at a table on the top right hand side of the drawing. They are ‘brainstorming’ ideas and the result of that interaction and ‘discussion’ is represented in a tangible way by the shape of a star.

Drawing 21



The excerpt below is part of a voice-recorded group discussion on the topic of research. This is part of an excerpt that has been used above to exemplify another recurrent theme: the students’ engagement with the everyday (Chun, 2015), with their experiential knowledge. Part of it is reproduced below to exemplify students working together and voicing what they think research is. By collaborating with each other they create their own definition of research:

Extract 66

Imogen: What is research? I think it is choose a project, collect data, write something, doing lots of things and finally write a paper about it; finally, analyse your final results about this research, and apply it.

Deborah: I think it’s also finding problems while you are in this area and try to fix it

Another student: and find some phenomena

Imogen: yes it can be phenomena, can be a problem, different projects

Another: so we should choose a topic and then collect some information in the data about this project

Everyone: and analyse it and make ...

Cesar: so how to make it ... maybe we need a big paper (setting up blank poster on table). First,

Everyone: first, ... 'project' (dictating to the person who is writing the words in flipchart paper) [...]

### **5.2.9. Theme 9: Working with sources**

Another theme concerns the use and treatment of research sources by participants. In some cases students appear to present what they have learned from (repeat and thus accept what they find in) sources. In many other cases, they engage with sources in personal ways, commenting on what is said, questioning what is said, in other words, responding to this information in their own meaningful ways.

In a diary entry I express my concern that a group of students did a presentation which consisted of a repetition of what the guest speaker had said about the educative system in Britain, and my expectation that they should comment or raise further questions on the sources used:

#### **Extract 67**

I must say that even the group on education presented a kind of reconstruction of Sophie's interview. It was very accurate but there was no further discussion or evaluation or commentary. In my instruction I did say that they could make comments or raise further questions but this shows me that perhaps I should not have given them the choice of not commenting or raising questions – perhaps I should have made the point that commentary should be a compulsory element. (Wed, 30 July 2014)

One group of students decided that they wanted to learn about the British flag as part of the British culture component of the programme. They searched for sources and created a poster that they subsequently shared with the rest of the class. Below is a picture of their poster which contains factual information. Like the previous example, I was concerned that no issue related to the flag had been raised and investigated. At the time I do remember feeling that there was something wrong with their presenting a repetition of what they had found in sources. Perhaps my

instruction to investigate issues related to a chosen topic was not clear enough. I would normally insist on their raising and investigating questions related to their chosen topic and supervise them group by group in class. In this occasion it seems that this group did not investigate a debatable issue, thus my concern and characterisation of this example is more as a repetition of sources than the result of their own voice development.

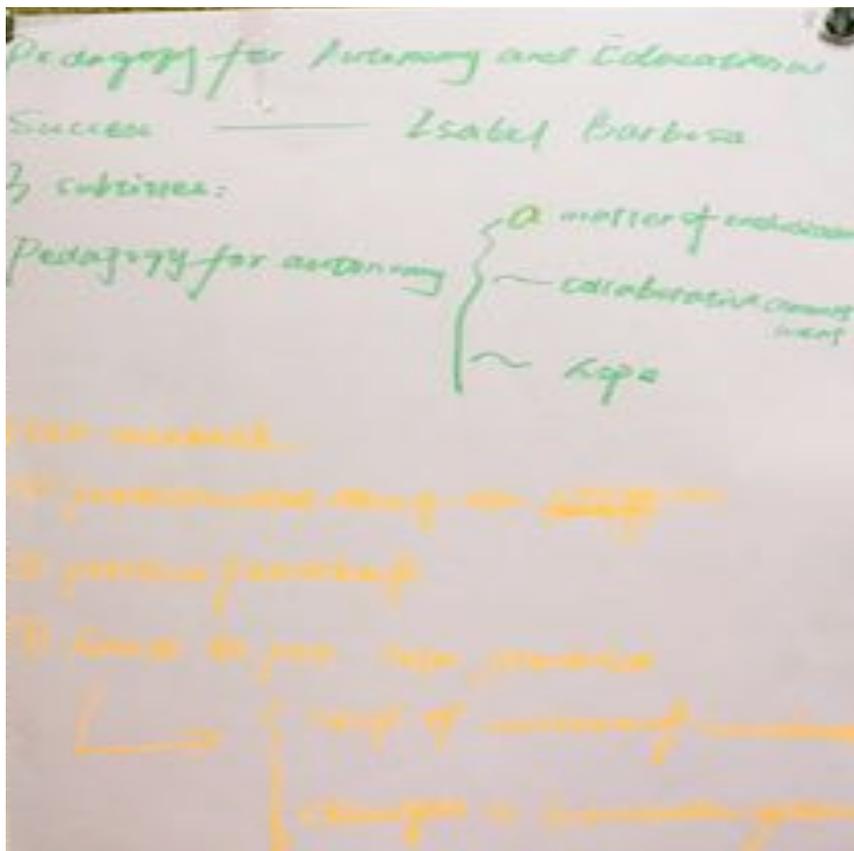
Poster 4



Below is a poster of work done in class by one group of students related to the topic of learner autonomy. It is their summary of a source they had searched for, read and analysed. Reading and discussing a source is perhaps the pre-requisite to understanding a topic more deeply and to learning about issues related to it. It is worth saying that the difference between this poster and the previous one is that the former is about a topic that was only investigated by one group of students whereas the latter was based on a topic that was explored by the whole class. This means that the group who investigated the British flag somehow is responsible for doing most of the work by themselves, that is, identifying issues and trying to find answers to them

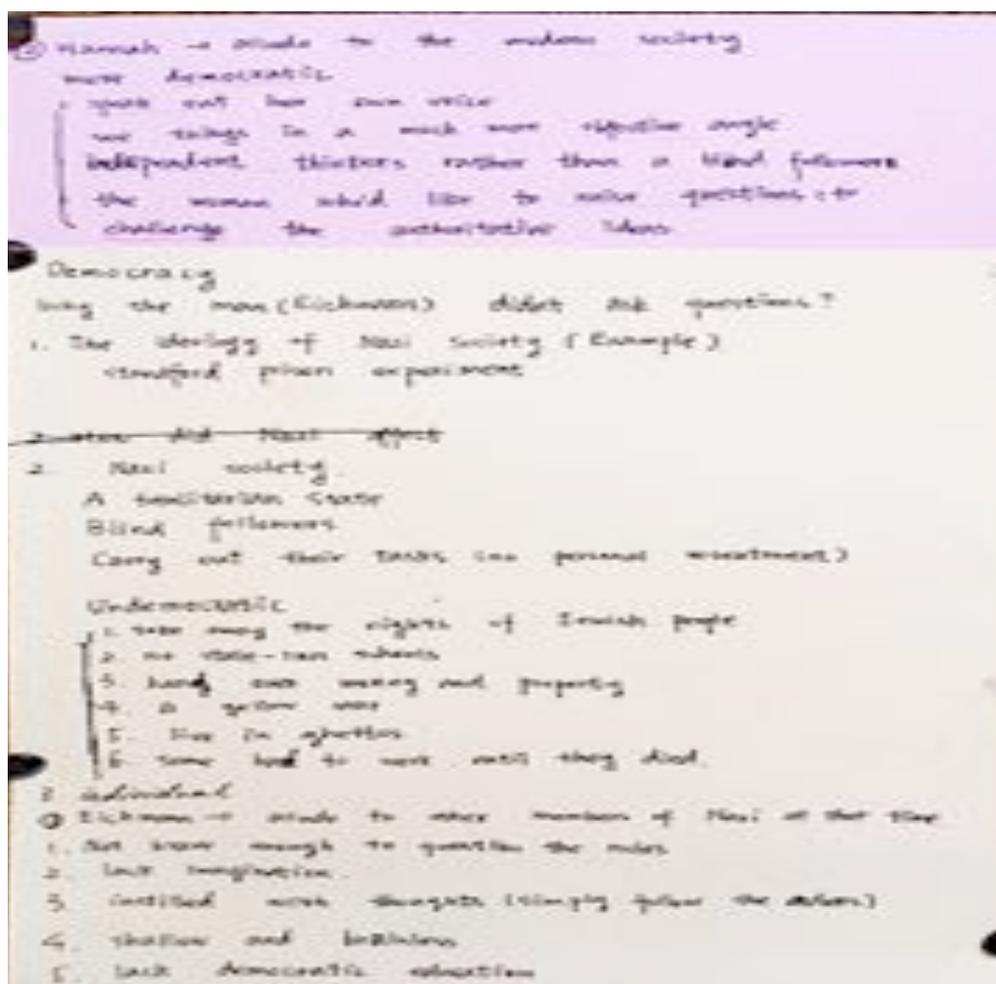
before sharing their understanding with the whole class. Conversely, the group who chose to find and explore another source on learner autonomy had an audience, the whole class, who had investigated different aspects of the same subject matter. Therefore, their work is not a final product but a piece that contributes to their understanding this subject matter better, before they are able to identify an issue that is of interest to them:

Poster 5



The poster below was created by a group of students who chose to work on a philosophy book chapter about Eichmann and the value of asking questions and thinking by oneself that I had offered as possible sources related to the topic of democracy. This group of students read this source, talked about it and prepared these notes in the form of a poster that they presented to the whole class:

## Poster 6



During the sessions whose focus was on aspects of the British culture, students were encouraged to think of and explore those aspects of the culture they were interested in. Different sources were offered for them to get inspired from. Two students chose to learn more about British humour from a book chapter from *Watching the English* by Kate Fox I had offered. The transcript below starts with Ramona and Laura trying to understand an expression from the source when I ask them if they could tell me what they are working on. They respond by asking me if I can help them understand an expression. After clarifying the meaning of that phrase, I elicited more information about the source they are working on. They speak about it until we are interrupted. I thus ask them to film themselves explaining how they have worked on this source. The last part of the transcript is their discussion of what to share with their classmates, which includes an introduction to the ideas presented in the source

and a more personalised comparison with the Chinese humour with examples from their current experience in the UK. For example, they noticed that one of the British lecturers in this programme uses her body language and facial expression more prominently than Chinese people and that this is not mentioned in the source:

#### Extract 68

I: can you tell me what you are doing?

Ramona: Do you really use this phrase (pointing at the book) 'oh, come off it'?

I: 'oh come off it', no I don't.

Ramona: Does it mean 'come on, ...'...?

I: I don't know. Is it not explained in there?

Laura: it is not explained in here very well (in the written source)

I: I see... let me see if I can help you (I read and I say) 'I see'.

[...]

I: is there any other phrase or anything else that you've found from [...]?

Ramona: ... It also mentions these two parts (pointing at the book), the humour and the comedy. I really get his point because humour and comedy both may be related but to some degree they may not because there is also  
(Another student interrupts the conversation)

I: can you continue talking to the camera as if it was me? [...] explain what you are going to do and how you are going to do it, and your frustrations about the topic.

Ramona: what are we going to do now? First, to write down ...

Laura: Yes, write down ...

Ramona: So what do you think we should add in the second part from the text

Laura: ... and the second part our opinion about the British humour

Ramona: I think maybe we can talk about Cathy

Laura: Cathy?

Ramona: I think she is humorous – it's a kind of British humour

Laura: Catherine, the writer of the book?

Ramona: no, our teacher

Laura: oh Cathy!

Ramona: do you think it is a good idea?

Laura: Maybe, but I don't know how to describe her humour

Ramona: From examples or generally talk about ... When we arrived at this university at the dinner table and she told us ... Is that a kind of humour. I think she likes taking a pick on someone.

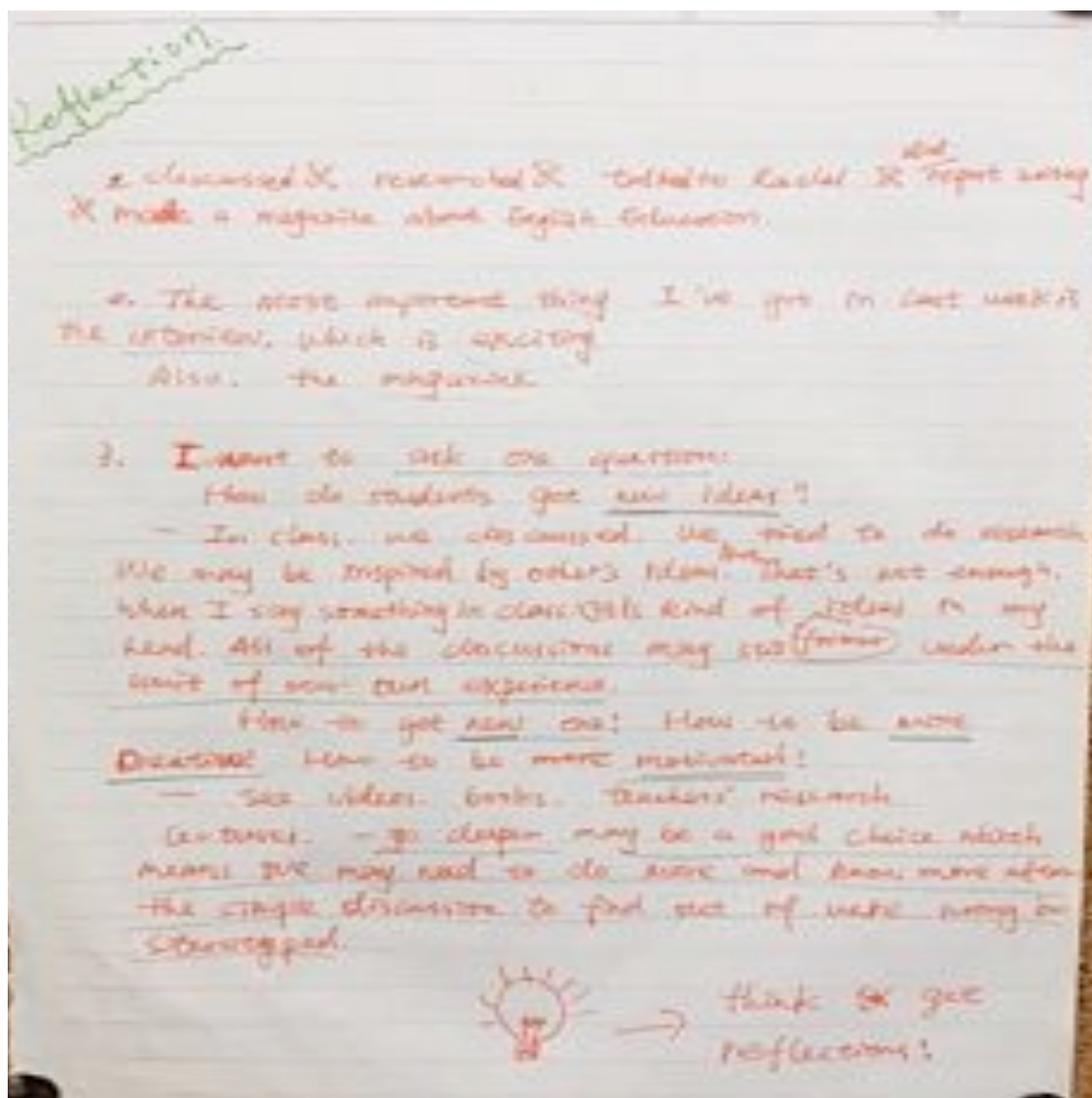
Laura: the facial expression is much more than in Chinese, but this book doesn't mention facial expression. We can add this.

Ramona: Yes, as our own opinion. Good idea. And apart from this, what else can we do?

Laura: I think that's all.

The reflection below refers to having used two sources of information in class, namely, an interview they conducted to a sociologist specialised in education at this university and a face-to-face discussion with a guest speaker in the classroom. More importantly, this student raises fundamental questions about the need to work with sources – books and videos, for example – to advance one's own experiential and possibly prejudiced or stereotypical knowledge, what Freire (2011) calls 'common-sense knowledge':

#### Written reflection 1



### **5.3. Summary**

In this chapter I presented a conventional content analysis of the data I collected while teaching in a short English Language and Teacher Development summer programme in the UK. This programme hosted visiting students from China who were doing a teacher training course mainly in English Language in their home country. First a description of practice week by week was presented; and second, a thematic analysis of all the data was presented. Nine themes were developed with examples; these were: 1) Embracing a student-centred pedagogy: a new and different way of doing things; 2) Homogeneous view of social behaviour: Identifying and developing understanding of implicit social norms in both own and foreign society; 3) Engaging participants' experiential, previous, everyday knowledge; 4) Resisting the new as well as own way of doing things; 5) Positive attitude to articulating and formalising thought; 6) Enlarging, Expanding understanding of both the social and the individual; 7) Thirst for change and improvement; 8) Working with others; and 9) Working with sources. In the next chapter, a content analysis of the third and final phase in my teaching practice will be presented.

## **Chapter Six: Phase Three: Academic Essay Writing Module (UK)**

### **6.1. Description of Practice**

This is the third and last of the three phases in the exploration and promotion of criticality in my teaching practice. Immediately after teaching in the summer English language and teaching programme I described in the previous chapter, I started teaching a module called ‘Higher Intermediate English: Academic Essay Writing’, for which I am the module leader, at the same university where I taught in the pre-session course in China presented in Phase One. This is a much shorter module than the previous two, consisting of a total of 20 hours, 2 contact hours per week for 10 weeks, while the previous two programmes consisted of a total of 80 hours each, 20 contact hours per week for 4 weeks. It is called an ‘Add+vantage’ module because it offers a work experience and career development advantage to students, broadening their knowledge, skills and qualifications within a work-focused environment. Like all Add+vantage modules, it is taken in each year of study and is credit bearing (10 credits) and a mandatory part of most undergraduate degree courses at this institution. Students must pass it in order to be eligible for an honours degree. This module is for second year undergraduate students across the university, whose first language is not English and whose English language score is IELTS 6.0 or equivalent. According to official documents:

Extract 69

‘The aim of this module is to encourage students to use the structures of language with ease and fluency and to develop these language skills to a point where they can function quite effectively and without significant problems in academic and professional contexts. They will develop their ability to recognise the different types of academic essay and the features of language typically used within these structures. Students will also be encouraged to extend their awareness of style and register, allowing them to further explore language use and meaning in context. (Ref: Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) B2’.

This module ran from October to December 2014 and included two assignments, an in-class test about the technicalities of writing an academic essay in week 6 and a

1,000-word essay to be submitted in week 10. For the latter, essay question options were provided. The cohort included 13 international students of varied disciplines: four students were from Spain (Hector, Fernando, Joseph, and Gabriel) and were studying Sports Management; one student was from Africa (Ulyses) and was studying Human Resources; Eliot, from Eastern Europe, was doing a course in Creative Writing; and seven students from China were doing courses in Electrical Engineering (John), Economics (Ian), Media and Communication (Whitney), Marketing (Tamara), Biomolecular Sciences (Sabrina), Business and Management (Tamsin), and Civil Engineering (Mark). This module was on general academic essay writing, which means that the subject matter is of general interest to all rather than discipline specific. This general subject matter focus has allowed me to include essay questions related to general current issues in education and migration; to academic writing; and to a few students' specific disciplines such as engineering and sports. Given the multiplicity of the students' disciplines in this cohort, it was difficult to suggest essay questions that were of interest to them all. As I will mentioned in the next section, after teaching this cohort of students I realised that I could have involved students in the process of thinking of and selecting a topic of their interest and thinking of an issue within that topic and possible positions in that debate for practice essays all together in class. Instead, I was the one who mostly suggested topics and research questions. One of the reasons why I did this was because at the time I thought that discussing social issues would be conducive to student criticality development. In the process of discussing and investigating social issues, the status quo was to be exposed and alternatives to the status quo were to be generated, engaging students' imaginative thinking and social critiquing skills. Perhaps by focusing on developing this kind of criticality, I neglected a different kind of criticality, which results from involving students in thinking of and exploring questions of their interests as a group.

Next I will describe how the syllabus was developed along the ten weeks, drawing examples from my own diary or the students' reflections where necessary.

### 6.1.1 Lesson One: Monday 29 Sep 2014

In the first lesson, the module guide was introduced and discussed; guidelines and forms about this practitioner research project were provided; we created and played 'Find someone who' to get to know each other; and started a debate on 'Engineering in universities', whether the industry should have more say in the curriculum for engineering students or not. For the purpose of this debate, two texts presenting opposing views were provided; students read one text only and discussed it with those who had read the same text; finally, students swapped groups and explained their texts to those who had not read it, and learned about the text they had not read. For homework, they had to read both texts and fill in a chart with the arguments found in each text and their own comments on each of them; and write a reflective account of their learning in this lesson via email.

Playing a game to get to know each other was meant to help start building up a community of practice and solidarity. My choosing the texts on engineering in universities was triggered by a desire to start a discussion on the relationship between the industry and the university which seemed to me problematic and would, to my mind at the time, be conducive to criticality development. Collaboration and reflection were two other important features in this lesson. In my own reflective diary I express my contentment with the lesson:

#### Extract 70

I really liked the class: the students seemed great, eager, and what made me very happy was the fact that they all accepted participating in the study! I enjoyed every bit of the class. I look forward to reading their emails!

### 6.1.2 Lesson Two: Monday 6th October 2014

In the second lesson the students presented the arguments they agreed with and contested from the two texts on 'Engineering in universities'. They were encouraged to think of one aspect of this debate that they would like to investigate further and were provided with another text related to the topic, which was entitled 'Academic freedom and the corporate university'. For homework, students had to read another source related to the aspect of the debate they wished to explore further and send me a plan of an essay. They were also asked to reflect on their learning in this class via email.

In my diary I reflected on my feeling frustrated about having devoted a whole session to debating, having spoken too much, not having been clear about instructions and having presented my position on the debate quite emphatically. At the same time, I justified why I had presented my position in the debate openly by saying that since this argument had not been mentioned in the sources, I felt it was my responsibility to include it. Expanding the views on this issue was to my mind conducive to criticality. What I did not see at the time was the possibility of adding an alternative view without defending it; opening up possibilities and allowing myself to continue learning and questioning my own assumptions:

#### Extract 71

I think I should continue raising awareness and encouraging criticality but leave it to the students to sleep on. If taking it into more will get me into trouble then at least it is good to raise awareness? Perhaps raising awareness of this is just one example of the ways in which people could think of everything. In other words, I want students to develop an eye for being creative in their way of thinking, not accepting everything that is given or the way they are accustomed to thinking. (My diary)

#### 6.1.3 Lesson Three: Monday 13th October 2014

In the third lesson, students were asked to explore aspects of academic language and essay writing by themselves. They were provided with five related content items and copies of the reference book units on these functional academic skills, which were Summarising (Unit 1.7), Paraphrasing (Unit 1.6), Quoting (Unit 1.8), Citing (Unit 1.8), and Referencing (Unit 1.8) sources in your essays (Unit 1.9). They were asked to choose one option, read about it, explain it to their classmates and apply the skill to the texts they have been working on, in class. I made sure that all five skills had been chosen. In this fashion, students were encouraged to think about these five options as related functions; to think about which one they were curious about; to pick one, to learn to find the book unit they needed, to do the work by themselves and to explain the new knowledge to their classmates. In other words, students were encouraged to reflect on and make decisions about their learning and to work collaboratively. Because these skills are normally used from the very first stages of the process of writing an essay, I included them at the beginning of the module. Also I made sure that while practising these skills students were aiming at

writing a practice essay. In other words, practising these skills was not an isolated, decontextualized task but integral to the process of writing an essay.

#### 6.1.4 Lesson Four: Monday 20th October 2014

In the fourth lesson, Carter, a new classmate, joined us and was introduced to the rest of the class. Using Bailey's (2011) *Academic Writing: A Handbook for International Students*, students explored and explained the following topics according to their needs: the reference list, citations and reference verbs; cautious language; punctuation and linking words to connecting ideas; and elements of introductions and conclusions. Besides, they had to find examples of the aspect of the language they were exploring in an essay I provided them with which was related to the practice essay they were working on: 'Democracy's Nemesis: The Rise of the Corporate University' by Giroux (2009).

Again in this lesson I had a clear intention to make students main actors in their learning by encouraging them to choose what aspects of the language to explore, and to consider and discuss a critique of the current marketised university, that is, an alternative view in the debate of the relationship between the university and the industry.

#### 6.1.5 Lesson Five: Monday 27th October 2014

In the fifth lesson students were provided with a list of all the topics covered so far in preparation for the first assignment. These were: Paraphrasing and Summarising; How to incorporate sources in your work; Find verbs of reference; Studying the reference list – each element in each source; Identifying the elements in the introduction and the conclusion; Academic style; Finding examples of language of caution; Identifying conjunctions and explaining them; and Picking one paragraph and explaining how punctuation has been used. They had to choose those they still had doubts about, get acquainted with them so that subsequently they could share their insights with other classmates. They were also provided with an academic paper on which they could find examples of the topic they were exploring. Also some of the students had prepared presentations of content they still found challenging at home, which they briefly shared with the whole class. For example,

Eliot, one of the students, shared a summary of key topics covered; Gabriel talked about language of caution; and Fernando discussed punctuation and linking words.

#### 6.1.6 Lesson Six: Monday 3rd November 2014

In the sixth class, the first assignment was administered in the first hour. After the coursework it is common practice to allow students to leave. However, I thought it would be good to use this remainder of the class for students to reflect on what they had learned so far. In accordance with the arts-informed research method deployed in this doctoral study, I brought paint, brushes, coloured pencils and drawing paper to the classroom and asked students to do a reflective drawing about their learning experience in this module. Subsequently I asked students to go around the classroom and ask each other questions about their artworks. They voice-recorded themselves and sent the recordings to me via email. Subsequently, I created a photo gallery with their artworks in the module page, Moodle.

#### 6.1.7 Lesson Seven: Monday 10th November 2014

In the seventh lesson, I introduced the second assignment, which consists of submitting a 1,000-word essay by the end of the module. I developed four optional essay questions: the first one refers to the nature of this very module, academic writing; the second and third ones refer to current issues on migration and education; and the fourth one refers to sports as many students in the module were doing a course in sports management:

Extract 72

1. Should academic writing be less academic? Discuss.
2. International migration: Given the global economic slowdown and xenophobia, should governments now impose more restrictions on international migration? Should would-be migrants be seeking opportunities at home?
3. Should the government grade colleges? Should the government rate colleges to hold them accountable for graduation rates, student debt and access for the poor and minorities?
4. Should children head the ball in soccer? What can be done to reduce the risk for brain injury?

After this, I invited students to partake in a task to discuss what the steps in the essay writing process were in preparation for writing the second assignment. In groups, students were provided with slips of paper, each of which featuring a step in the essay writing process, and had to put them in order. Then a whole class discussion was held in which they shared their views. The third and final task of the class consisted of providing students with a new essay question and sources for them to continue practising the steps involved in planning an essay. Students had to read the sources and select relevant information to answer the research question and write either summaries or paraphrases that would eventually be included in an essay. In his reflective writing, Eliot shows excitement about starting a new practice essay:

#### Extract 73

Furthermore, the fact that another practice essay has been initiated gives me an opportunity to put everything I have found useful during the first half of the module into practice right from the start.

I responded to Eliot's words by raising doubts about whether it would actually be a good idea to write a second practice essay on the topic I suggested, due to my concern that the topic might not suit everyone's interest:

#### Extract 74

Yes. However, I wonder whether it would be best to work on this essay topic for the next three weeks or perhaps to use other essay topics? I am sure the idea of continuing working on this one topic could lead us to go deeper into it. But I am concerned about those students who may find this topic far away from the topics they deal with in their fields.

It is surprising that it did not occur to me that I could have invited students to think and select essay questions of their own interest for a second practice essay. On the other hand, by sharing my concern with this student, I was trying to involve him in thinking about this issue and of ways of responding to this concern.

#### 6.1.8 Lesson Eight: Monday 17th November 2014

First, the results of coursework 1 were handed out and a question and answer session about this was held. Second, how to use a collocation dictionary was introduced.

Third, descriptive and evaluative language was introduced, and students were provided with strips of paper with examples of each kind of language. In groups they had to discuss both kinds of language and put each example under the correct category. Fourth, the structure of a student essay entitled ‘The Restructuring of the Banking System in South Korea’ from the reference book was discussed as well as the use of descriptive and evaluative language in it. Finally, each student set up their own homework.

#### 6.1.9 Lesson Nine: Monday 24th November 2014

In the ninth lesson, first, revision of the structure of two types of essay, namely exposition and discussion, was conducted. Second, the linguistic concepts of homogloss and heterogloss (Martin and White, 2005) were introduced to help students identify voices in texts and understand how and when writers are assertive or cautious in their texts. In her reflection of this class, Sabrina focuses on the second task, homogloss and heterogloss and raises a question about the difference between heterogloss and cautious language:

##### Extract 75

In the class we have identified heterogloss and monogloss in the article and discussed their difference. Since the heterogloss is similar to the caution language it is difficult to decide whether it is caution language or heterogloss.

In my response to her question I clarify that by using both heterogloss and cautious language the writer is acknowledging other voices:

##### Extract 76

I would say that these two terms refer to the same thing. Being cautious with words is acknowledging other voices (heterogloss).

Ian, another student, reflects on the importance of being aware of these two kinds of language; on the implications and challenges of using them in his writing; and on ways in which he could overcome these difficulties:

### Extract 77

This week I have learned about two different types of words to describe the writer's opinions in the essay. It reminds me again that choosing the proper words to use is necessary if we want a perfect essay. For me, because of the lack of the vocabulary I can only find a little different words to describe my thought. Even I get more words now, it is still difficult for me to use high level words. Maybe I need to practise more and read essays written by others to learn how to use the words.

#### 6.1.10 Lesson Ten: Monday 1st December 2014

The last lesson was devoted to discussing questions that students might have about the second assignment, an essay they were to submit by the end of the week. In his reflection, Ian highlights the gains of talking about the essay question he has chosen and started investigating with classmates who had chosen the same question, in the class:

### Extract 78

The last week I communicated with my classmates about how to write the final essay. I had chosen a topic before but found some difficulty in expanding my ideas. One thousand words is not many, however it is still hard to write using only the thoughts I had before. So I found someone who decided to write the same essay and discussed together, it really make sense, at the end of the class, I got more ideas which is best for my essay.

So far I have presented an overall description of Phase Three of the research, including glimpses of issues and features, which will be developed more lengthily in the next section when the core themes emerging from an analysis of the data will be developed with examples.

## **6.2. Thematic Analysis**

In this section the themes that emerged from a thematic analysis of the data will be presented, with examples. The data that has been analysed in this phase consists of: 50 student weekly reflective written accounts; 7 student drawings; 10 student written explanations of their own drawings; 5 student voice-recorded explanations of their drawings; and 9 entries of my own lecturer-researcher's diary. For the purposes of time and space, the following data has not been included in this analysis: 5 video-

recorded classes, the first four lessons and the last one; 2 students' content investigations; and 24 students' practice essay drafts with feedback from the lecturer. The emerging themes from an analysis of the data in Phase Three are (1) Regarding others in the process of learning; (2) Positive attitude to reflective drawing; (3) Identifying own language needs, asking the lecturer for advice and appreciating the lecturer's feedback; (4) Positive perception of academic essay writing skills learned; and (5) Limitations and challenges in the learning and teaching experience. An explanation of each of these will be presented below.

### **6.2.1. Theme 1: Regarding others in the process of learning**

This theme refers to the social aspect of learning which includes listening to others, learning with and from others, getting to know others, discussing and sharing ideas and views with others. Others refer to the lecturer, the students and those involved in this learning experience. Regarding others means acknowledging the gains we obtained from learning the language with others; while at the same time acknowledging the challenges this presents.

In their reflective written accounts, students highlighted understanding their peers' accents and pronunciation better and sharing something special they had learned with the others in class as gains from the learning experience. Some students valued having the opportunity to get to know each other, and to talk to people from different countries in the class. Talking about what has been learned, reviewing work done with others, and learning from discussing work done with others were also highlights from the students' perspectives. Discussing the content they explored by themselves with other classmates; explaining it to others; and working with others are other gains the students mentioned. Being concerned about making their own message understood by their classmates; understanding new content thank to their classmates' explanations; and learning from others were also highlighted. Learning about each other's ideas and views in a debate, voicing and sharing their views in the classroom, and making sense of texts together in groups are among the gains mentioned by participants. At the same time, the challenges of communicating with speakers of other languages effectively, of understanding each other in the target language, and of discussing and following debates in the target language were acknowledged.

Finally, some participants mentioned having benefitted from continuing classroom discussions outside of the classroom and from talking about their essay questions for their final assignment with people outside of the classroom. As a result, they got more motivated in the search for sources and a focus to answer their essay question.

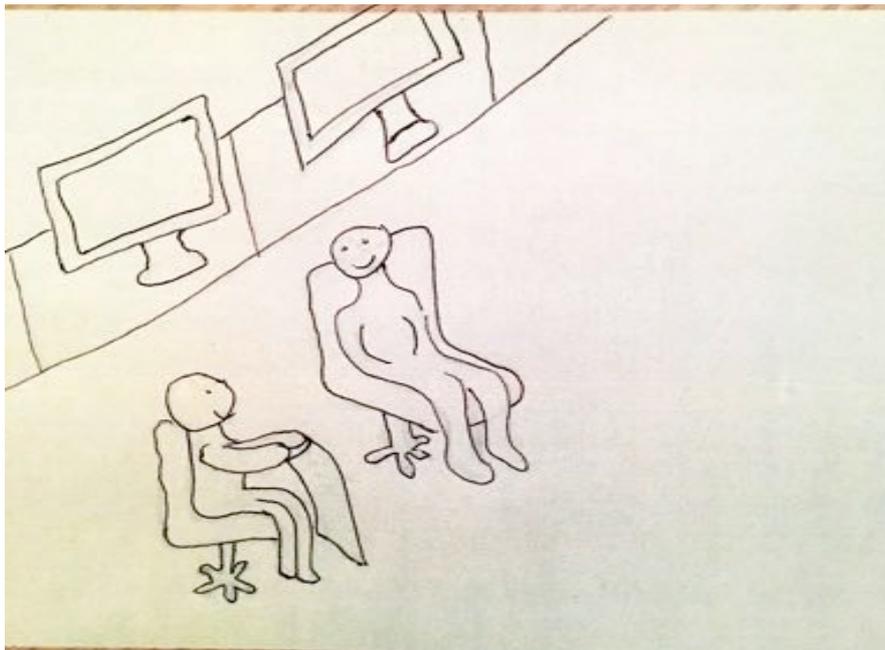
In the excerpt below Sabrina highlights benefitting from discussing with others; learning different aspects of the issue being discussed from her classmates' different contributions; having discussions with the lecturer; gaining new ideas to support her own position from her classmates; and looking forward to having more engaging and open discussions with her classmates in the following class:

#### Extract 79

The impressed part in the second lesson is having the discussion in group and having a brief presentation about the discussion. In this part I learned more about my classmates' opinions of the same topic from different sides, such as the industry only having half of the say on designing the curriculum and the university having the other half about the decision. Also I like the interaction between other classmates and Ana after the presentation. The interaction just like a chemical reaction, made me think things more deeply besides just brain-storming. This lesson helped me to support my view with some new ideas and elaborations. (Sabrina, week 2)

Similarly, in his drawing, John highlights talking about his work with other classmates as something positive and completely different from his previous learning experiences. His drawing depicts such a moment when he and one classmate are talking about the work they have done in the classroom. One of them holds a poster and explains it to the other who listens carefully. He included computer desks in the background to show the sitting arrangement in the classroom too:

Drawing 22



In a voice-recorded conversation about his drawing, John explains that the highlight of this educative experience is having the opportunity to ‘hear ideas after we research’, in other words, to talk about what they have investigated and learned with other classmates and to listen to and learn from each other:

Extract 80

John: This is our class, because this course gives me an increase in [...] we need to hear ideas after we research – the big difference from other course.

Ian: Yeah I have experienced this stimulus before when I have professional gift; we have this but not in the classroom like this. But I think you should draw more people.

In his written reflection John reiterates his intention to draw the classroom including the special sitting arrangement and to highlight what is special about this experience, namely sharing and talking about what they have explored and learned with each other in a relaxed way. There is also a response to a comment I had made in class about his drawing in which I asked him if the two people in the drawings were naked, by saying that even though he did not intend to draw two naked people he was happy to acknowledge a connection between their supposed nakedness and his feeling liberated, relaxed and free in class:

### Extract 81

After the test, there was half an hour for us to draw a picture. Because of my terrible skill of drawing, you thought that a naked person in my painting. If it was a naked person, it would mean our lesson are very relaxing and delightful, just like without clothing will let us reach the feeling of unconstraint. Does it make sense [sense]? Actually, I just want to draw the class in my memory, and outstand the biggest different of our higher intermediate academic English writing module from other modules. (John)

Gabriel expresses both his positive attitude towards socialising with his classmates in the classroom, and the challenges of having a debate in the target language, due to his not knowing some uttered words and the speed of his classmates' talk:

### Extract 82

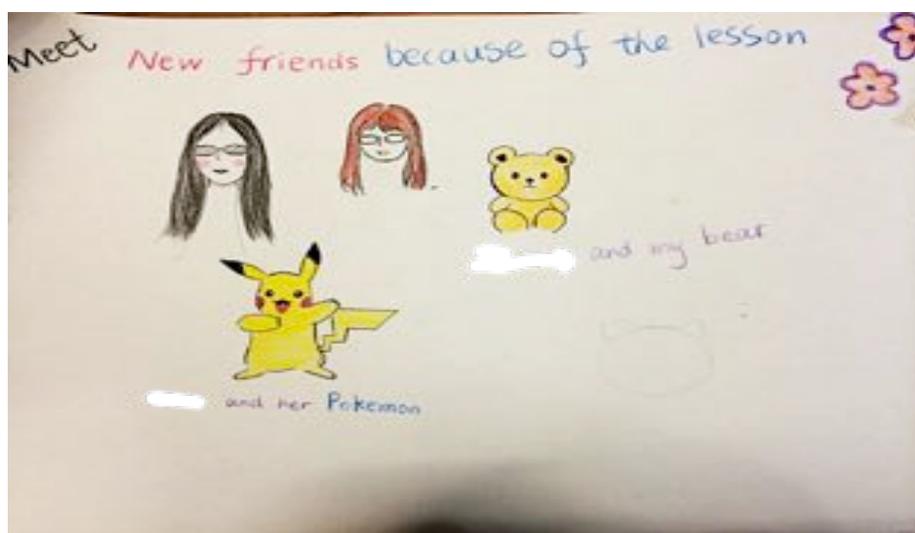
Last week was my first English lesson in the course. I was a bit nervous for it, but I already know some guys of this class. We started the lecture knowing each other, we talked with the other mates about our studies and hobbies. I liked talking with Ulyses, he is from Nigeria, he looks very friendly and extrovert.

After that, we debated a subject, engineering in universities. In this debate we talked about the industry and the university, and how they could be more prepared for the future, for the workforce when students finish their degree.

In the debate I felt strange because I didn't understand some words. Furthermore, some mates talked so fast. (Gabriel, week 2)

In her drawing, Tamara highlights making friends and working with them together:

### Drawing 23



She verbalises her regard for working with others in the classroom in a written explanation of her drawing:

Extract 83

I drew a portrait of Coco, Jenny and their favourite cartoon, Pokemon and bear, separately. If I have to link the painting with the lesson, I'd say that because of the add-vantage lesson, I make some new friends, we study together and progress together. (Tamara)

In my lecturer-researcher diary I also express regard for developing a social educative experience. For example, I express contentment to see groups working well together and to generate an atmosphere in which students can perform their identities; I evaluate students' group discussions positively; and I encourage them to share what they have learned from investigating different topics on academic writing with each other in the classroom, as well as to tell the classmates who had been absent the previous class what we had done. The excerpt below shows my contentment with observing a group of students discussing actively and my encouraging each group member to communicate their work to other group members:

Extract 84

I was happy to see how well the group integrated by Gabriel, Mark and Ian seemed to work, really well, communicating in English and discussing their choices ... After they worked in groups for twenty minutes I asked the members of one group to split and tell the other two groups about their findings. (Class 9 – 25<sup>th</sup> November 2014)

### **6.2.2. Theme 2: Positive attitude to reflective drawing**

Despite my doubts at times about the appropriateness of using arts-enriched methods in an academic essay writing module, my students and I acknowledged the value of reflecting on the experience through drawing. While in my diary I expressed my belief that perhaps through drawing students can make meaning differently, in their reflections, some students pointed out that drawings was relaxing, fun and interesting.

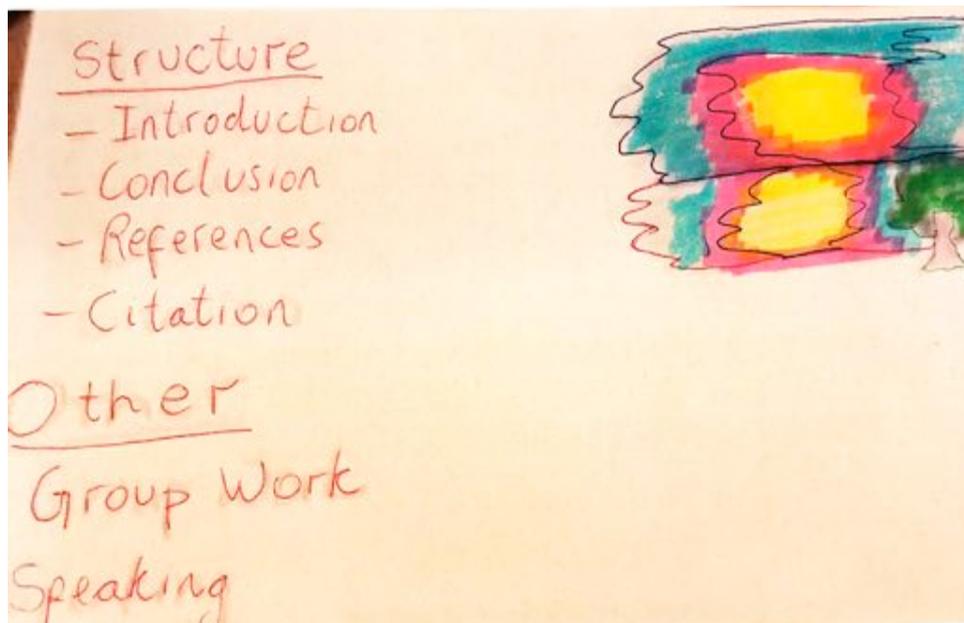
Below is Sabrina's drawing and explanation of it in which she highlights the relaxing effect this drawing session has exerted on her especially after doing a test. She has

drawn a wishful thought, that is to say, a sunset, which she wishes to see but cannot see anymore because this module finishes at 6 pm when it is already dark. At the same time, she acknowledges that the sunset represents the relaxing way she felt during this reflective drawing session:

#### Extract 85

After the test it have a time for us to using different ways to express our feeling about the class and mention the things that have learn from the class, I was very enjoy this session. Since I feel quite nervous before the test, this session just help me to relax after the test. I have drew the sunset in this session. The first reason of drawing sunset is every lesson is end at night, I would like to see a sunset again after the end of the class. The other reasons is the sunset have express my relaxing emotional which after the test. (Sabrina, week 6)

#### Drawing 24



In his written reflection, Gabriel also acknowledges this session's relaxing effect and adds that it was also funny to see each other's drawings and talk about them:

#### Extract 86

Last class was the exam date [...] After that, we painted a picture to relax and to show the class what the English lessons mean for us. Then we were looking at our mates' drawings and they were explaining the meaning of them - it was funny. (Gabriel, week 6)

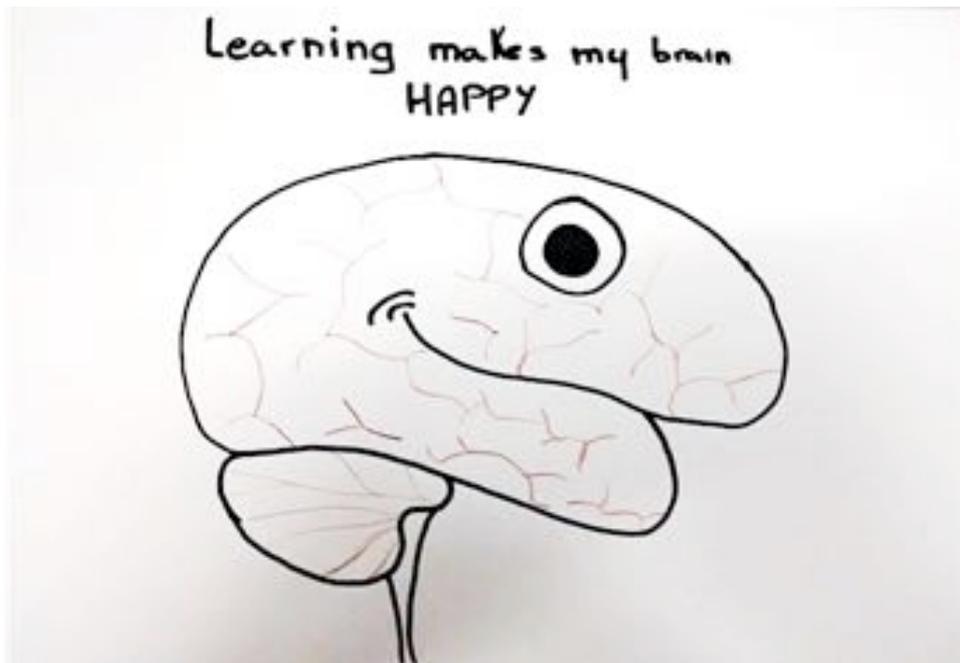
The excerpt below shows that while I am concerned with deviating from the syllabus by using an arts-informed research method in this project, I still acknowledge the value of using it, as it allows for different ways of meaning making:

Extract 87

Yesterday I felt that doing arts was not right; that the time should be used in a different way; that students have given me enough feedback. However, when I saw their paintings in some cases it seems that maybe I can find out more. (4<sup>th</sup> November 2014, reflection on 6<sup>th</sup> class – lecturer-researcher's diary).

The drawing below is by Fernando whose emphasis is on feeling happy because of 'all the things [he] has learned':

Drawing 25



He says that the drawing session had been interesting, and that if he had had more time he would have liked to draw all the feelings he experienced in the course of the module, not just happiness as a result of learning lots of things. For example, he would have added moments of unhappiness, nervousness, comfort, busyness and relaxation. These reflections about his feelings would not have been revealed if it had not been for this arts session:

#### Extract 88

I think my drawing it too clear, but I couldn't finish it. I wanted to write all the things I learned. So, as I think it is clear, I prefer write about the activity. The activity was a different way to express our feelings. I think it was interesting but we had no time enough to think about it and to draw good drawings, at least it was my case. For example, I think I could draw a graph with my feelings (happy/unhappy, nervous/non-nervous, busy/non-busy, ...) using different colours. So I think it's good idea but it would have been better to have more time. (Fernando: Reflective writing class 6)

### **6.2.3. Theme 3: Identifying own language needs, asking the lecturer for advice and appreciating the lecturer's feedback**

Another recurring theme across the data is the students' reflections on their needs and their request for advice from the lecturer. In their written reflections, some students ask the lecturer for advice on their essay drafts, on how they can improve their English, on reading material, on specific aspects of essay writing, and on how to discuss in a debate. At the same time, some students acknowledge that receiving feedback and advice on their work gives them confidence and willingness to work harder. In her reflective diary, the lecturer for her part mentions guiding students in finding and using sources and materials by themselves in class and acknowledges the importance of doing this and wishes the course was longer to provide students with continuous feedback.

Below are four excerpts from different students' reflections, which illustrate this theme. While Ian asks the lecturer to focus on a specific aspect of academic English, referencing, when reading his essay, Sabrina asks the lecturer for advice on what texts she could read to study their introduction, conclusion and linking words as she wishes to develop a reading habit. Whitney appreciates that I pointed out that she should work harder on grammar and expresses her willingness to do so; and Eliot appreciates receiving feedback on his practice essay and analysing another essay in class:

#### Extract 89

By the way although I have tried to solve the problems in my essay, I am not sure whether my reference is okay. So could you give me more help if I still have problems in it? Thank you. (Ian, week 4)

#### Extract 90

Although it now the definition from the book, still need to read more article to make use of the linking words, introduction and conclusion. Do you have any advice for some reading resources that is useful for me? since I would like to cultivate a reading habit to improve my writing. (Sabrina, week 4)

#### Extract 91

As Ana you suggested, grammar is a big issue for me, so I will do more exercises so that hopefully next time my work will be better. (Whitney, week 2)

#### Extract 92

This lecture tied in closely with the previous one, as I have not only received feedback on the practice essay that I am writing, which means that I am now confident to have it completed on time for our next lesson, but a analysis of yet another essay directly in class has also taken place. (Eliot, week 4)

At the same time, in my diary, I mention helping students to find sources in the essay writing process. There is also evidence of my reflecting on how much guidance is desirable and on the value of one-to-one tutorials for feedback as an alternative way of providing feedback:

#### Extract 93

I moved around helping them find the book online and the units they needed. I asked Sabrina who had found the online version of the book to tell everyone how to find it – I am not sure if the rest understood this though. But I think these minor learner-centred moves make a difference in creating a more democratic and inclusive environment. (My diary, Monday 20<sup>th</sup> October 2014 - class 4)

#### Extract 94

I also felt frustrated yesterday before the class by the length of the course and how little we can do in such a short time. Students need a closer guidance. I thought how useful it could be for them if I could have a tutorial with each of them to talk about their writing. (Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> October, 2014 – class 5)

### **6.2.4. Theme 4: Positive perception of academic essay writing skills learned**

Another recurrent theme is participants' focus on aspects of academic essay writing skills. Among the gains from the experience they highlight: having learned to be

accurate, and to keep a narrow focus in their essay writing; understanding what an exposition essay is more clearly; improving the speed of writing; developing their views and learning a new way of writing in which their voices and interests are paramount; understanding different ideas within a text; formulating one's own essay questions; learning about references and collocation dictionaries; and learning vocabulary from reading texts and content that they can apply in other modules. Some participants express wishing to write good academic essays while others express feeling more confident to write essays after the class.

In the excerpt below Eliot expresses his learning to identify different points of view in a text more clearly and his realising that within a debate he can choose what aspect to develop in an essay, and formulate his own essay question. In other words, he understood that one way of developing his own voice in an academic essay is by selecting what aspect of the debate to focus on and then looking for material to respond to his own essay question. He also clarifies that in the past, he never felt that he developed his own position, but rather chose those arguments in the debate that were either more clearly formulated or more prominent:

#### Extract 95

The second lecture has focused on the shaping and presentation of individual ideas. This helped me to confirm my understanding of the text through listening to others, but also, and even more importantly, I began to understand different ideas within the text on a more individual level. I can now distinguish one idea within the same text from other ideas more clearly than before, which is in turn starting to become a useful skill for close reading of a whole variety of texts.

Being able to formulate a clear idea, which can be expanded upon via research helps me, in terms of personal performance, to conduct research faster, but also to collect more relevant information when conducting research and I do hope that similar presentational activities will be conducted sometime in the future too.

Another aspect of effective essay writing is not only finding relevant information within existing research material in regards to a certain topic, but also, as I was helpfully reminded, formulating one's own questions in regards to the area of research, because only such questions which are formulated so that they are of particular interest to the student can draw accurate and relevant conclusions.

Hence, with the help of this lecture I was able to devise a new essay writing strategy to apply from now on, in which (unlike previously), I would firstly formulate the very specific question of interest to me within the specified topic area, and only then would I conduct a highly specified research related to that one question in particular.

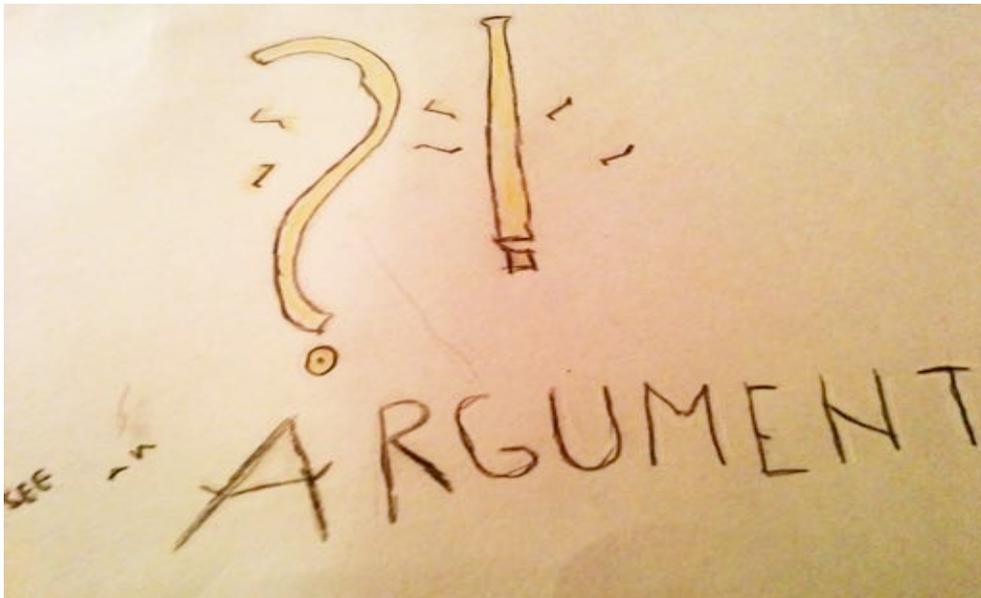
Prior to utilising this strategy, my method of topic research for essay writing was that I would collect as much information about a whole

subject area as possible first, and only formulate my specific question in regards to which specific keywords within the subject area I have obtained the most material on, or what information were most clearly presented in that research material.

I now realise that such methodology not only prevented me from presenting my stance in the clearest way possible, but the whole process was unnecessarily time consuming too. Because of this evolution of my methods, I believe that the exercises contained within the lecture were helpful. (Eliot, week 2)

In his reflective drawing, halfway in the module, Eliot expresses the same realisation as one of the greatest gains from the module:

Drawing 26



Below is his written explanation of his drawing:

Extract 96

The most important thing that I've learned so far is to stay relevant to the essay question and not to go off-topic during the progress of the essay. This is quite useful, as I discuss in the attached recording. The meaning behind my drawing is then also related to this.

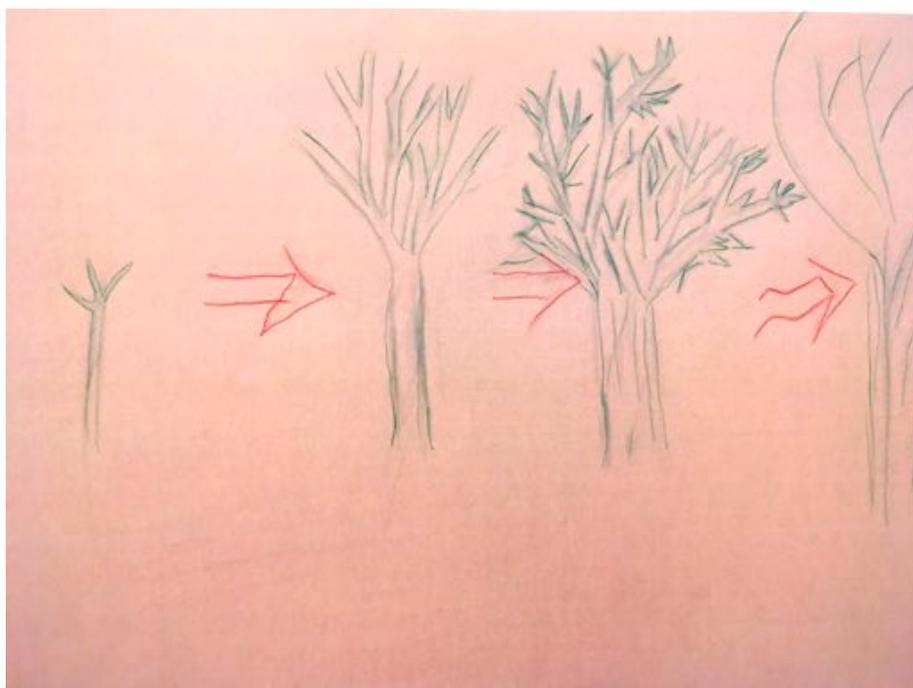
Below is the transcription of Eliot's voice-recorded talk about his drawing:

### Extract 97

The drawing represents for me what we have learned, that is the formation in the text of an argument within an essay because I now can see more clearly that an essay .... run ... a very concrete question during many small questions. That's very important for me and very helpful in other modules. So for example you can have a person arguing for one side of the issue and another one arguing for another side of the issue. That is why there is a question mark to show the person who disagrees with the person who has an exclamation mark. Of course what is in the middle is ... a little argument that they are having. This poster represents people in a debate although they are not drawn there.

The drawing below is by Ian. His explanation of it centres around his own academic English development, improvement and growth as reflected by the progression of trees:

### Drawing 27



Below is his written explanation:

### Extract 98

This class we had a test and after that we were asked to write or draw or whatever way to describe our feeling about the lessons we had taken. I just drew some trees because I did not have better idea and it was the best one to show about what I had got in these lessons, I think.

Below is a transcript of his talk about it in class:

Extract 99

I: so this is when you started, right? And little by little ...

He: yeah, of course at the beginning, it's the first year when I come to England and it's really different about the academic essay writing than in China so I only have these small trees.

And when I start to take the class I think I have many source/ thoughts; it begins to grow.

I think just this week it's a bit sad (?); this tree grows faster because we had the test; and it's beginning to have the leafs.

And I hope that at the end I can grow like a big tree.

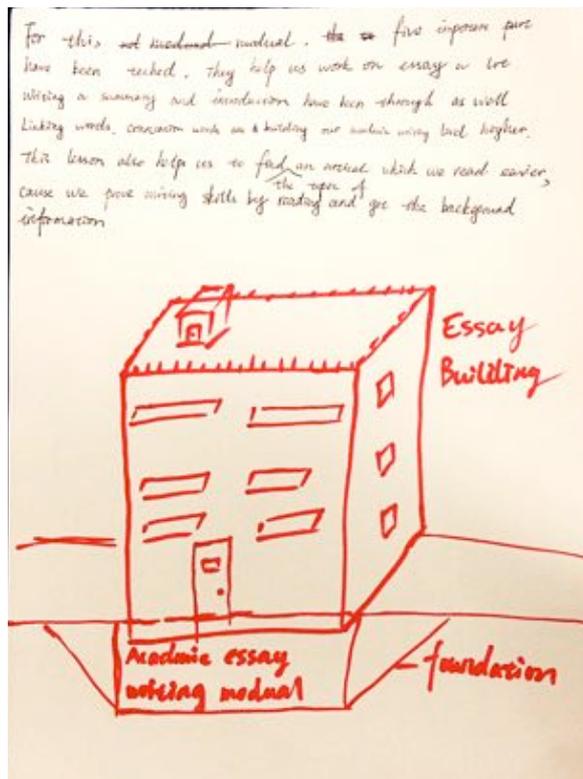
Sabrina's drawing (drawing 24) has already been discussed in terms of both her feeling unhappy with missing the sunset and having lessons in the evening, and her feeling relaxed in the drawing session. However, when talking about her drawing she does not say anything about the words she has written in the drawing, which refer to academic English skills: the structure of an essay with its introduction, conclusion, references and citations; and aspects of the lessons such as group work and speaking. In a second correspondence about her drawing she says that she has found more meaning in her own drawing, as she now relates the changes in the sun force with improvement and gaining confidence in academic writing:

Extract 100

The picture attached in this email is my drawing. Besides, it is a good idea for changing the sunset force to pursue improvement of academic writing. I just thought that the sunset can also mean feeling more confidence in this module as well!

The drawing below is by Mark who highlights developing his academic language skills in this module. Among the gains he includes reading and understanding sources and writing an essay, including introductions, summaries of arguments, linking words and connectors. He also refers to having learned to 'find the topic of an article', that is to say, to identify the issue, thesis and arguments in articles:

## Drawing 28



### 6.2.5. Theme 5: Limitations and challenges of the learning and teaching experience

Another theme that emerged from the data was negative evaluation of aspects of the pedagogy and of the students' performance from both the lecturer and the students' perceptions. In other words, both some students and I point to aspects of the experience that we perceive as needing improvement or change.

The students' challenges include: limited learning from classmates' presentations; long discussions, too much homework and reflections; not knowing what to expect in the test; and subject-content chosen by the lecturer as an impediment. From my own perspective, the limitations of or criticism to my own practice and the students' performance include: not being clear or well-focused; feeling frustrated after class; wondering whether students learned from each other's presentations; feeling uncomfortable about being the provider of answers to their doubts; feeling frustrated about going over the same content over and over again; negative evaluation of students' presentations; concern about student disengagement in and outside of the classroom; questioning my pedagogy when some students indicate they prefer being

lectured to learning about content by themselves; wondering whether the lab we are in has an impact on the learning experience; discomfort with students speaking in their mother tongue; and feeling guilty for taking long to do the marking. In what comes next I will present examples from three students and from my diary.

One of the students, Tamara, in her reflection from the fourth week lists some aspects of the pedagogy she feels both frustrated about and in need of improvement. She shows collegiality, care and respect in the way she introduces her reflection:

Extract 101

I came up with some things that we can improve together.

Her discomfort is with exploring many big topics by themselves in each class; with having the responsibility to learn about a topic by themselves and explain it to other groups and to learn about new topics from other groups; with having long discussions about articles in class; and with doing work outside of the classroom. She argues that they - she makes her concern general - would benefit more from working on one small topic per week and from not having homework:

Extract 102

Likewise, we were given a topic during the class and started to prepare in a rush, consequently, most of us are likely to feel a little bit over-whelming to do group presentation. Moreover, due to the poor prepare and language barriers, what we have absorbed and learned from other group explanation were actually quite limited.

Secondly, frankly speaking, instead of massive discussion and comprehensive article to do during class, although we have benefited from that teaching method but it is still time-consuming and less efficient ... it could be quite stressful for us to do weekly reflection paper and one extra essay. Honestly, I wish we could focus on particular small aspect of topic each week and less work to do after class. (Tamara, week 4)

Tamara's points are fair; focusing on one topic at a time seems very reasonable. On the other hand, some of her arguments resonate with aspects of a technocratic education or marketised university, which offers students a set of tools or masticated information as if it was a product of consumption. Tamara seems to disapprove of all the messiness of discussing, working together, articulating and sharing their own limited understanding from their readings in class, of getting involved in doing the

hard work of thinking by themselves and sharing their own limited views in class. In a marketised university all the hard and interesting work always seems to be left for students to do for homework and on their own. Therefore, it is no surprise if there is resistance to a new and messy way of working. However, it is precisely this messiness what the current neoliberal education avoids and therefore it might be sensible to be cautious about this criticism, even though her suggestion of working with one topic at a time is sensible. The rationale behind encouraging students to work together in class is in the hope that in the course of this process they and the lecturer will be confronted with different views which will contribute to their developing a broader and deeper understanding of the topic under discussion.

In my own diary I also reflect on the issues that Tamara raised. The three excerpts below show my concern firstly about not having managed time well enough to ensure that all the groups share their work with the other groups; and secondly, that students might not always pay close attention or listen to and learn from each other. The third excerpt shows my relief after Eliot, one of the students, said that there was no need to go over the content that had already been explored and shared. In other words, he had paid attention to each and every topic that had been explored and shared and he had offered to write a summary of each of them to share with everyone in the class. What he did in the following class was to inform everyone in the class that he has written this document and that he would share it with everyone but that he would not go over the content again. What he said dissipated my concern about whether students were really paying attention to and learning from each other. While Tamara raised questions about the limitations of learning from each other's explorations and presentations, Eliot has taken the initiative to write a document with what he has learned from all the topics. It is worth saying that the reference book units covered in this module are accessible to all the students via the module Moodle page and that students are encouraged to continue working on them at their discretion:

#### Extract 103

I also realised that perhaps I did not manage the time well as three groups did not have enough time to share their work

It seems that the rest of the class is not really paying attention, even though what they [the presenters] are saying is actually accurate. I am not sure if

they really learned from each other. Each of them worked with one topic so learning about the other topics from their classmates was essential.

Eliot brought a summary and highlighted that he would not talk about it because we had already dealt with these topics the previous class ... I felt so happy to hear that.

Another student, Hector, points out that the practice essay content is not engaging for him because his discipline is sports; and that he might feel more comfortable in class if he could discuss content he is familiar with and understands better:

Extract 104

My second class was worse than I expected because I don't know much about engineering and industry, I read both texts, but my problem is that I'm not able to take out more conclusions about the issue so I could not participate as often as I would have wanted to do it ... I think that if we had another issue maybe I would be more comfortable when I am in class.  
(Hector, class 2)

His point is fair and I remember feeling troubled about the issue he was raising at the time and telling him that as a practice essay task, it would be good if everyone explored and discussed the same topic. At the same time, I did suggest that he could explore another question related to his discipline but because everyone had already started working on this common issue, he joined them in the end. Looking back, the problem was not with inviting all students to work on the same topic but with imposing my own topic. Now, after finishing collecting data for this doctoral study and while still teaching in this module, I do encourage my students to decide on topics and essay questions for a practice essay all together in class. This would have solved the issue that Hector raised. However, it seems to me that what motivated me at the time to impose the topic concerning the relationship between the industry and the university in engineering was my understanding that criticality, what I was seeking to understand and promote via practitioner research, was related to the educational reality that the industry is more and more linked to universities at least in this context. In other words, the current neoliberal, marketised university, with its links with the industry, is the focus of critique of critical accounts of society, which are in favour of public institutions for all, equality and justice. According to my readings of the literature at the time, doing a critique of the neoliberal university was

a way of exercising criticality, and that is the main reason why I chose this topic for a practice essay. The reason why this topic was related to engineering is because I consulted sources that related to at least some of the students' disciplines. Very often this module recruits engineering among other students. In this case I consulted a specialist magazine on engineering which includes debates of issues from different perspectives and the debate of whether the industry should have a say in the university curriculum or not was the one I selected for discussion in class.

As I mentioned earlier, I was troubled by the issue that Hector had raised because I was aware that students also exercise criticality when they investigate questions that are relevant for them (Tubbs, 2004; Brown, 1998) and he was precisely asking to choose a debate issue he felt passionate about. At the time we all continued discussing the topic I suggested and Hector did not get as much involved as we would all have liked it.

In my own diary I also point to my own concerns regarding the students' performance and engagement. In the fifth week I notice that Hector and Joseph have not been sending me either their weekly reflections or their written practice work, and wonder what I could do:

Extract 104

I have realised that neither Gillem nor Joseph have been sending work or reflections lately. I wonder what to do. (My lecturer-researcher diary, Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> October 2014, Reflection of 5<sup>th</sup> class)

Hector's lack of engagement might very well be related to the unaddressed issue he has raised as explained above. Somehow my imposing a topic for discussion seemed to have contributed to Hector's lack of participation.

The two excerpts below from my diary show my frustration both with myself for being in control of what happens in the classroom, and with my students for not being as autonomous as I would expect them to be:

Extract 105

I felt frustrated because I feel I am in control - more than I would like to.

I do not like it when Mark asked me so many questions. I want him to find the answers by discussing with his partners.

I was trying to encourage students to work with other students in the classroom rather than relying only on the lecturer as an authority who has all the answers to all the questions, as I certainly do not have answers to all the questions. Having said this, Mark, the student from the excerpt above, might have felt frustrated too for the opposite reason, my not fulfilling the role of a lecturer who is happy to provide all the answers.

### **6.3. Summary**

In this chapter I presented a content analysis of the data I collected via practitioner research while teaching an Academic Essay Writing Module from October to December 2014. First, a description of the practice class by class, including comments on how I developed criticality along the course of the module, was presented. Second, I presented the five themes that emerged from an analysis of the data, which are (1) Regarding the other in the process of learning; (2) Positive attitude to reflective drawing; (3) Identifying own language needs, asking the lecturer for advice and appreciating the lecturer's feedback; (4) Positive perception of academic essay writing skills learned; and (5) Limitations and challenges of the learning and teaching experience.

In Section 6.1 Description of Practice, I mentioned three ways in which I intended to promote criticality, which can be summarised as follows: first, by encouraging student active participation in the learning process. For example, I encouraged students to find the information in reference books and dictionaries; to learn about syllabus content by themselves with material provided in class; to express what they had learned and their language needs orally and in writing; to talk to others in the class and learn from each other; and to dare to ask questions, share doubts, among others. Through example, I also tried to show a positive attitude to students' questions and doubts and towards acknowledging one's limitations; as well as to try to work hard in the search for understanding. In other words, I thought that if I encouraged students to be fully in charge of their own learning I would at the same time contribute to their criticality development. Second, I thought that incorporating in the curriculum material that would contribute to questioning the status quo and raising awareness of social justice and equality would promote criticality. Third, by

voicing alternative views that have not been mentioned in discussions, I thought I would be contributing to developing criticality.

In the next chapter criticality will be the focus of attention and the research questions will be addressed. First, a re-reading of all the themes that emerged in my practice will be presented in the light of criticality, which will respond to the first research question. Second, these signs of criticality will be discussed in relation to pedagogy for autonomy, EP and arts-enriched research methods in order to respond to the second research question.

## Chapter Seven: Discussion

*You climb a long ladder until you can see over the roof, or over the clouds.* (Dillard, 1989:19)

This chapter will respond to the two research questions posed at the start of this study:

1. What signs of criticality are there in my practice?
2. To what extent can pedagogy for autonomy, exploratory practice and arts-enriched research methods contribute to developing criticality?

The first section of this chapter will discuss the individual, socio-cultural and interpersonal aspects of criticality in the three phases of my teaching practice (section 7.1). The second section of this chapter will discuss those aspects of criticality in my practice in relation to: autonomy (section 7.2.1), exploratory practice (section 7.2.2), and arts-enriched methods (section 7.2.3).

### **7.1 Re-reading the themes in the light of criticality**

In Chapter Four, Five and Six the themes emerging from each teaching cycle were presented with examples, phase by phase. In this section, in order to facilitate the discussion of the links between the several themes that emerged from my practice and the meanings of criticality explored in the literature, I grouped the themes in three overarching categories which I called: Being in Charge; Sociological and Cultural Awareness; and Collaboration and Others (See Table 4). Next, each overarching theme will be discussed, phase by phase, in relation to criticality, with a particular emphasis on, but not exclusively, these main currents of thought: Critical English for Academic Purposes, Critical Pedagogy, Critical Thinking and Critical Theory.

	Phase One	Phase Two	Phase Three
Being in Charge	<p>Theme 1: Contentment with learner-centred practice</p> <p>Theme 2: Developing awareness of self</p> <p>Theme 5: Drive to learn and become better</p> <p>Theme 6: That which is deep and difficult</p>	<p>Theme 1: Embracing a student-centred pedagogy: a new and different way of doing things</p> <p>Theme 3: Engaging participants' experiential, previous, everyday knowledge</p> <p>Theme 6: Enlarging, expanding understanding of both the self</p> <p>Theme 9: Working with sources</p>	<p>Theme 2: Positive attitude to reflective drawing</p> <p>Theme 3: Identifying own language needs, asking the lecturer for advice and appreciating the lecturer's feedback</p> <p>Theme 4: Positive perception of academic essay writing skills learned</p>
Sociological and cultural awareness	<p>Theme 3: Developing sociological and cultural awareness</p>	<p>Theme 2: Homogeneous view of social behaviour: Identifying and developing understanding of implicit social norms in both own and foreign society</p> <p>Theme 4: Resisting aspects of own and foreign classroom practice</p> <p>Theme 7: Thirst for personal and social change and improvement</p>	<p>Theme 5: Limitations and challenges of the learning and teaching experience</p>
Collaboration and others	<p>Theme 4: Sharing and communicating articulated understanding with others</p>	<p>Theme 5: Positive attitude to articulating and formalising thought</p> <p>Theme 6: Enlarging, expanding understanding of the other</p> <p>Theme 8: Working with others</p>	<p>Theme 1: Regarding the other in the process of learning</p>

Table 4

### **7.1.1 Criticality and overarching theme ‘Being in Charge’**

This section will discuss the signs of criticality in the themes that emerged from a content analysis of my practice and were re-arranged under the umbrella term ‘being in charge’. Table 4 shows this re-arrangement of themes clearly. Next I will discuss the themes under the umbrella term ‘being in charge’ in the light of criticality as explored in the literature, phase by phase. The headings below synthesise the aspect of criticality being discussed and the current of thought it comes from.

#### *7.1.1.1 First Teaching Phase*

In this first phase, four main aspects of criticality related to ‘being in charge’ will be discussed. The first one derives from critical theory and deals with affection, disruption, difference and self-awareness (7.1.1.1.1). The second aspect of criticality derives from critical thinking and the critical philosophical tradition, and deals with contentment with learner-centred practices and self-awareness too (7.1.1.1.2). The third aspect of criticality derives from CEAP, critical pedagogy and critical thinking and involves empowerment for social justice and change, developing one’s own voice, personal engagement in learning, self-awareness and metacognition (7.1.1.1.3). The fourth aspect of criticality related to ‘being in charge’ derives from critical pedagogy and refers to freedom, decision making, authority and self-development (7.1.1.1.4):

##### 7.1.1.1.1 Critical Theory: Affection, disruption, difference and self-awareness

With reference to her EAP practice, which is informed by critical theory, Grey (2009) argues that affective interactions among students are indicative of a certain openness to different possibilities, and that a disruptive practice allows students to perform difference and develop their identities. This resonates within my own practice with my students’ positive feelings about a relaxing classroom atmosphere and a learner-centred class. In Phase One many students experienced difference by feeling relaxed and in charge of their learning in the classroom. For example, Barbara consistently expressed how much she liked having the chance now to make decisions about her learning and compared this experience with her past learning experiences which had been more teacher-centred. She also found drawing very

useful and relaxing. This can be considered a disruptive practice for them because it was different and allowed them to perform difference and learn more about themselves. Developing awareness of self is what Tubbs (2004) refers to as one of the goals of higher education. In discussing the relationship between philosophy and education and drawing on the Greek critical philosophical tradition, he argues that philosophy's higher education, or to put it in other words, that philosophy's purpose is ultimately to learn about oneself and the other and that it is a shame that many students go through their education without ever having the chance to enquire about their epistemic doubts. In Phase One, Alice expresses in her drawings her realisation that she is actually a good student. After reflecting on her learning, that is, what she has done and learnt that week, she realised she had put considerable effort and dedication in her learning, from getting up early, through taking a busy train in the scorching hot weather of Beijing in May, to practising different aspects of the language in and outside of the classroom. Doing reflective drawings in an academic English language course also constitutes a disruptive practice, which opens up possibilities of performing difference and developing one's own identity, in Grey's (2009) words. In Phase One, and in Phase Three as I will show later on in this chapter, students express a positive attitude towards reflecting on their learning via drawing. In Phase One, students said that drawing was an exciting way of expressing and explaining their thoughts.

#### 7.1.1.1.2 Critical Thinking and the Critical Philosophical Tradition: Contentment with learner-centred practices and developing awareness of the self

Contentment with learner-centred practices and developing awareness of the self (and others) are two themes that relate closely with Brown's (1998) conceptualisation of *critical thinking* and with what Tubbs (2004), following the *critical philosophical tradition*, calls *philosophy's higher education*: that is, the predicament that learning is ultimately about oneself and the other, and is about exploring one's own epistemic doubts as part of the course one is doing. Regarding the former, Brown (ibid.) conceptualises critical thinking broadly as the ability to investigate one's own epistemic doubts and to develop self-awareness. He mentions Stuart Mill as an example, a person who was convinced that education should be about this but thought that this was never going to be possible in educative systems

characterised by homogeneity. Investigating one's own questions is a self-directed, autonomous act; it is being in charge of one's own learning; in other words, it is a learned-centred practice. Also by reflecting on their own learning, participants developed self-awareness. Similarly, Tubbs (2004) argues that learning should be about exploring one's own questions and knowing about oneself and the others, both of which seem to resonate with the participants' contentment with being in charge of their own learning by having opportunities to make decisions about what to explore and so on, and with developing self-awareness via reflection on their learning experience as well as by working with others, which is another theme that has emerged. In other words, by reflecting on one's own practice and by interacting and working with others, participants claimed to have learned more about themselves and the others. All in all, these two themes, as well as the theme about contentment with working with others, can be conceptualised as characteristics of critical thinking and a critical education, as discussed by Brown (1998) and Tubbs (ibid.) respectively.

#### 7.1.1.1.3 Critical EAP, Critical Pedagogy and Critical Thinking: Empowerment for social justice and change; how these skills are taught; and developing one's own voice, personal engagement, self-awareness and metacognition

In Phase One, and Phase Three as I will show later in this chapter, students referred to the instrumental gains of the educative experience, that is, to having learned more about academic language skills. Within CEAP, with reference to her experience teaching EAP to business students, Grey (2009) created disruptive experiences which would enable her students to perform difference contributing to their identity development. She claimed that her major contribution to her students' educative experience was to provide opportunities for them to perform their identities by confronting experiences of difference and diversity, expanding possibilities, acknowledging the existence of heterogeneity, contradiction and multiplicity in the process of performing one's subjectivity. She acknowledges that the instrumental benefits of the EAP programme were a by-product of creating opportunities for students to perform gender, race, class diversity and in so doing, their subjectivity and multiple identities which would contribute to a more just and inclusive world. Equally, Benesch (2001) and Chun (2015) focus on creating educative practices which enable their participants to make meaning of the world by engaging their own

diverse and often contradictory experiences of the content in question. The focus of the above-mentioned practices is on developing students' critical capacity to engage in making sense of this world, taking into account their own experiences and knowledge and striving to move towards certainty (Freire, 2011). For CEAP, educating is more than attaining the academic language skills of argumentation, developing a stance, writing grammatically correct and coherent texts and so on; it is also engaging critically in the world, striving for equality, developing one's 'freedom and authority in the process of making decisions' (Freire, *ibid.*), and developing one's identity and awareness of the role of discourse in the construction of the self (Grey, 2009). Having said that, CEAP is also about becoming empowered by learning how to defend oneself from injustices, which involves developing a critical, suspicious attitude towards totalising discourse (Freire, 2011), having knowledge of the epistemological foundations of the discipline in question (McPeck, 1981), and using the target language effectively to achieve these goals (Benesch, 2001; Morgan, 2009). The purpose of Critical EAP is to empower students by helping them improve their language skills to achieve goals that are to everyone's benefit, social justice and social change for justice and equality. Certain rigid goals of CEAP can be criticised but ultimately CEAP's purpose is humanitarian, that is, to empower academic English language learners to be fully developed human beings who care about others and strive for truth, justice, and equality in the struggle to perform self (Grey, 2009), freedom and authority, and critical curiosity (Freire, 2011).

For example, in Phase One students positively evaluated having learned more about the structure of the English language after closely identifying the subject-verb-object pattern in sentences within a text. As I expressed in my diary this task was not taken from a textbook but I suggested it because I realised from looking at their writing that this was an issue for many of my students. The students' positive evaluation of this task lies in the lecturer's autonomy and competence to propose tasks based on the students' language needs outside of already made textbooks. Exercising one's freedom (Freire, 2011) to create a disruptive practice (Grey, 2009), which will benefit students' learning experience, constitutes a critical practice. What I mean by a disruptive practice is that it moves away from traditional views of pedagogy and textbook use.

#### 7.1.1.1.4 Critical Pedagogy: Freedom, decision-making, authority, and self-development

In Phase One when I asked my students how they felt about making decisions about their own learning, most of them expressed their contentment with the novel experience of being in charge of their own learning, with reflecting on their learning and with choosing tasks according to their own language needs. However, one of the students, Ariel, during the semi-structured interview, argued that it was the lecturer's role to choose what to teach and that it was ok for students to choose among a few tasks. He argued that sometimes students do not know what is best for them. Even though I had made a conscious and research-informed decision about deploying a pedagogy of autonomy, his words made me reflect on it again. Freire (2011: 99-106) argues that the most difficult task for a critical educator is to achieve a balance between exercising authority and freedom, and that their authority is exercised in their struggle for freedom. In other words, the more the critical educator limits their own freedom by means of making decisions the more authority they gain. It is an authority that does not impose but respects decisions. A critical educator guides their learners in making their own decisions and in doing so they foster their learners' authority and freedom. Charly, another student from Phase One showed dissatisfaction about the lecturer's (my) seeming lack of authority. In the class we had talked about the value of switching off our phones during the lessons. However, when some students used their phones I asked them again if they could not use them. Charly showed surprise that I would not take their phones away. I said that I would expect them to understand the importance of not using them, to make their own minds about it and take responsibility over their own decisions. Freire argues that educating critically entails respecting educators' and learners' freedom; unlimited freedom is licence, which is as bad as authoritarianism. It is when limiting our freedom by making decisions that we assert our authority and we get to know ourselves better (Freire, 2011: 99-106).

Reflecting about one's own learning-practice is also part of the overarching theme: being in charge. In Phase One, when I asked students during tutorials how they felt about reflecting on their learning, some of them said that reflecting was being in charge of their own learning and some others that reflecting helped them improve. Freire (2011) refers to reflecting on one's practice as part and parcel of the task of

critical teachers and learners. As I have mentioned before, Freire argues that a reflective, suspicious and methodical attitude is necessary in the process of turning one's ingenious curiosity into a more critical, certain and epistemological curiosity. Being reflexive is an autonomous action; in other words, it is, as some of my students said, being in charge. Other people cannot do the thinking for us but if the thinking is done with others the reflection might be richer, as it pushes each person to consider other aspects that one might not have thought of. With reference to the relationship between reflection and improvement as mentioned by some of my students in Phase One, it can be argued, echoing Freire's words, that noticing and becoming aware of what we know, do not know and want to know via reflection means moving forward, improving in the transformation of one's ingenious curiosity into critical curiosity; in other words, reflection contributes and is constitutive of the process of developing one's critical attitude.

#### *7.1.1.2 Second Teaching Phase*

In the second teaching context, three main signs of criticality related to the overarching theme 'being in charge' have been identified and will be discussed below. One of them is engaging the everyday in meaning making, which derives from CEAP (7.1.1.2.1). Another sign of criticality consists of enquiring one's own questions, self-development, and developing the quality of one's own curiosity, which derive from critical thinking, the philosophical critical tradition and critical pedagogy (7.1.1.2.2). The last sign of criticality in this phase is developing critical curiosity and a suspicious attitude to totalising discourse, and engaging with expert knowledge, which derive from critical pedagogy and critical thinking (7.1.1.2.3):

##### 7.1.1.2.1 Critical English for Academic Purposes: Engaging the everyday in meaning making

In Phase Two the theme engaging participants' experiential, previous, and everyday knowledge resonates strongly with CEAP. Both Benesch (2001) and Chun (2015) stress that a critical EAP enables students to make meaning by engaging their knowledge and experience of the everyday (Chun, *ibid.*). Benesch refers to a cohort of students of psychology to whom she gave space in her class to make sense of the

subject content they had been lectured about by engaging their own lived experiences of it. One of them confessed that she had suffered from anorexia for example. Chun (ibid.) also refers to examples of engaging students' own experiences of globalisation, which was the topic under discussion in the class of the lecturer he was observing and supporting. He also noticed that the students made better sense of globalisation after they engaged in responding to different texts and videos on the topic in their own personal ways, from what they knew and had experienced. Similarly, I consistently encouraged my students to engage their knowledge and experience in the process of making meaning of different topics. One of them was the concept of research, which students discussed in groups and shared via posters with the whole class. While sharing their views and experiences of this concept, questions and issues arose which would have served as good starting points for students to explore more deeply using sources subsequently. After students engaged their own knowledge and experience of this topic, I provided them with sources about two types of practitioner research and encouraged them to make sense of them by engaging their own knowledge and experience of the topic.

#### 7.1.1.2.2 Critical thinking, the critical tradition and critical pedagogy: enquiring one's own questions, self-development, and developing the quality of one's own curiosity

In Phase Two, a syllabus component was Aspects of the British Culture. In these sessions I encouraged students to choose and explore aspects of the culture they were interested in. Many of the aspects of the culture they chose to learn more about were related to their lived experiences of difference in the new context. For example, Julian decided to work on politeness after noticing that this was a marked feature in the new culture and different from Chinese politeness. In sum, Critical EAP argue that engaging students' personal ways of understanding, responding to and questioning content, with others in the classroom constitutes a critical practice.

This, however, is not exclusive to Critical EAP; it also resonates with characteristics of a pedagogy for autonomy, exploratory practice, the Greek critical tradition Tubbs (2004) alludes to, critical pedagogy (Freire, 2011), and critical thinking (Brown, 1998; McPeck, 1981). Tubbs (2004) argues that since Socrates and the Greek critical

tradition, the highest purpose of philosophy has been to learn about oneself and the other, and that philosophy and education are thus two sides of the same coin. He rescues this fundamental relationship between philosophy and education from its neglected place and highlights the important role of education in ensuring that students enquire their own doubts as a core task within their degrees. By arguing that students go through higher education without having the chance to enquire their epistemic doubts as the essence of their degrees, he suggests that the role of education should be to ensure that students 'pursue the necessity of their own doubts as the substance of their degree' (Tubbs, 2004:xiv). It is in the process of enquiring into one's own doubts that one learns more about oneself and the other. Freire (2011) focuses on the learners' curiosity and the role of educators in fostering the development of the learners' curiosity from an ingenious to a critical or epistemological curiosity. He argues that teaching should be critical, which involves both helping students in the promotion of the 'quality' of their curiosity (ibid.:32) and recognising the value of emotions, sensitivity, affection and intuition in the process of helping learners in this transformative process (ibid.:45-46). This argument resonates with Merleau-Ponty's critique of reason as an absolute ideal (Langan, 1966). Langan (ibid.) discoursing on Merleau-Ponty's critique of reason, argues that rational thinking is not without imperfections, and stresses that any formalisation of thought is incomplete. This incompleteness and partiality is worth highlighting in any discussion of criticality. Instead of speaking of rationality, reason and formalisations of thought, Freire speaks of the development of one's curiosity in a continuum from commonsensical, ingenious curiosity to critical curiosity, and acknowledges the role emotions and intuition play in this process. Despite its incompleteness, one should strive to strike the balance towards developing a more critical curiosity, which implies arriving at more certain findings. It is important to acknowledge that despite the fact that one's findings might be hardly ever complete or absolute, men's partial formalisations of thought are our legacy on earth and therefore valuable.

#### 7.1.1.2.3 Critical Pedagogy and Critical Thinking: Developing critical curiosity and a suspicious attitude to totalising discourse, and engaging with expert knowledge

When using sources I also encouraged my students to respond to them in personal ways from their experience and knowledge of it. In the theme: Using sources, it emerged that while students mostly engaged actively in making meaning of sources, sometimes they did not. One student in her reflection of the learning experience suggested that it was important to move beyond the exploration of their own everyday knowledge and enquire other sources of expert knowledge. This is in line with McPeck's (1981) argument that in order to be critical one has to have knowledge of the epistemic foundations of the discipline one is enquiring into. In other words, this student's call for student deeper engagement with expert knowledge is what McPeck referred to as being critical or exercising critical thinking. Within Critical Pedagogy, Freire (2011) argues that educators should help learners move from an ingenuous curiosity to a critical curiosity by deploying a suspicious and methodical attitude to discourse that is presented as totalising, as the only truth. He argues that 'critical thinking or thinking with certainty implies both respect to the learners' common sense knowledge in the process of moving from an ingenious to a critical or epistemic curiosity, and respect and encouragement to the learners' creative capacity' (Ibid.:31; my own translation from Spanish). The student that I have mentioned above refers to this necessity to move from an ingenious to a critical curiosity that indicates more certain findings (Freire, 2011:32).

#### *7.1.1.3 Third Teaching Phase*

In the third teaching context, two main signs of criticality will be discussed in relation to being in charge. These are, like in the first context: affection, disruption, difference and self-awareness, which derive from critical theory (7.1.1.3.1); empowerment for social justice and change; how language skills are taught; and developing one's own voice, personal engagement, self-awareness and metacognition, all of which derive from CEAP, critical pedagogy and critical thinking (7.1.1.3.2):

#### 7.1.1.3.1 Critical Theory: Affection, disruption, difference and awareness of self

As with Phase One, in Phase Three students expressed a positive attitude towards reflecting on their learning via drawing. The discussion in 7.1.1.1.1 applies to this aspect of criticality.

#### 7.1.1.3.2 Critical EAP, Critical Pedagogy and Critical Thinking: Empowerment for social justice and change; how these skills are taught; and developing one's own voice, personal engagement, self-awareness and metacognition

Like in Phase One, in Phase Three students referred to the instrumental gains of the educative experience, that is, to having learned more about academic language skills. By looking at my own students' comments on the academic language skills they gained, one can notice that actually learning to develop one's own stand, to identify arguments in a text, to formulate one's own essay questions is part of engaging critically in discussing world issues. As McPeck (1981) argues, essay writing is a very appropriate way of testing critical thinking. The students' excitement in finding that things had clicked in their minds regarding academic language skills has to do with 'how' these skills were taught as opposed to 'what' was taught (Benesch, 2001). In Phase Three I presented four examples to illustrate the students' positive perceptions of the academic language skills they had gained. Eliot said that one of the greatest gains of this module was a realisation that when writing an essay he can choose what to focus on, formulate his own essay question, develop his own position and voice. Until then he had thought that he had to develop the position that was the most clearly formulated or prominent in a debate. After realising that his voice was important, the value of this module became more evident. How to develop one's own voice is one of the greatest tasks of any academic language course, and yet this task is very often neglected in the EAP classroom. It is no surprise that Eliot had a misconception of how he should write an essay and whether and how he should develop his own voice. This misconception and misunderstanding also exists among EAP practitioners. This is a serious issue because it denies students their freedom and responsibility to make meaning and develop their critical curiosity. It is synonymous with doing things mechanically without much thinking, without taking

one's engagement in the world seriously and without believing in the powerful means of change a critical education is.

Reflecting on the gains of the experience, Ian mentions having developed and improved his academic language skills. He drew a comparison between his academic language skills development and the way a tree grows, and mentioned the important role of formal assessment in his language development. The growing tree he drew to represent his learning resonates with John Stuart Mill's metaphor of each person's unique self-development. He compares human nature with 'a tree, which requires to grow and develop itself on all sides, according to the tendency of the inward forces which make it a living thing' (Mill, 2001; Also In Brown, 1998:187). Like Ian, Sabrina also generally refers to having gained confidence and improved her academic language skills, which she compares with the force of the sunset which occurred during the class and she drew in her drawing. In her drawing she also referred to having learned the structure of an essay including introductions, conclusions, references, and citations, and other aspects of the experience such as group work and speaking. It is not minor that she highlighted group work and speaking as both involve active participation and collaboration and both are constitutive of a disruptive practice, in the sense that it was different from what they had experienced before. Group work and speaking involve personal engagement which in turn involves self-awareness and metacognition (Brown, 1998) and constitutes an opportunity to make meaning in personal ways (Chun, 2015; Benesch, 2001). Finally, Mark highlights reading and understanding sources better; 'learning to find the topic of an article'; and writing an essay informed by his readings and understandings. He expressed these gains in a drawing of a tower block which represents the 'essay building' whose 'foundations' are developed in this module. In other words, a solid basis and understanding is needed in order to write a solid academic essay. In order to develop one's own voice in a debate, it is necessary to know what the arguments and moves in that debate are. When reading sources students were encouraged to identify the issue being discussed, the writer's position in the debate, and the arguments mentioned in the development of her/his position. McPeck (1981) argues that in order to be critical or exercise one's own critical thinking one needs to know the epistemic foundations of the discipline one is discoursing about and that essay writing is an appropriate form of doing this. I also

encouraged my students to develop their own essay questions based on their readings of the literature. Devoting time to discussing their readings and understandings in class was important because it is from there that further questions can be identified and developed all together. Reading and understanding sources can be considered integral to the transformative process of moving from an ingenious to a critical curiosity (Freire, 2011).

In Phase Three, Hector expressed his discontent with discussing a practice essay topic that he did not know much about, namely, the relationship between the industry and the university regarding engineering. McPeck (1980) argues that in order for a thinker to be critical they have to have knowledge of the field they are exploring. In this respect, this task seems to have prevented him from exploring a question within his discipline, sports science, which would have allowed him to be critical. Tubbs (2004) and Brown (1998) agree that an education that follows a critical tradition is concerned with enabling learners to enquire their own epistemic needs. Following these thinkers, the task I suggested prevented Hector from exploring his own questions and in so doing exercising critical thinking. Again critical thinking involves dialogue; perhaps if he and I had talked about our reasons for my proposing and his rejecting the task, we could have understood each other better and resolved this issue. The fact that Hector stopped sending me his reflecting writing and participating suggests that dialogue would have helped solve this unnecessary situation.

#### *7.1.1.4 Summary*

All in all, 4, 3 and 2 signs of criticality have been identified and discussed in relation to being in charge in my first, second and third teaching contexts, respectively. The 4 signs of criticality in cycle 1 are: affection, disruption, difference and self-awareness (critical theory) (7.1.1.1.1); contentment with learner-centred practices and self-awareness (critical thinking and the critical philosophical tradition) (7.1.1.1.2); empowerment for social justice and change, developing one's own voice, personal engagement in learning, self-awareness and metacognition (CEAP, critical pedagogy and critical thinking) (7.1.1.1.3); and freedom, decision making, authority and self-development (critical pedagogy) (7.1.1.1.4). The 3 signs of criticality in phase 2 are:

engaging the everyday in meaning making (CEAP) (7.1.1.2.1); enquiring one's own questions, self-development, and developing the quality of one's own curiosity (critical thinking, the philosophical critical tradition and critical pedagogy) (7.1.1.2.2); and developing critical curiosity and a suspicious attitude to totalising discourse, and engaging with expert knowledge (critical pedagogy and critical thinking) (7.1.1.2.3). Finally, the 2 signs of criticality in phase 3 are: affection, disruption, difference and self-awareness (critical theory) (7.1.1.3.1); and empowerment for social justice and change; how language skills are taught; developing one's own voice, personal engagement, self-awareness and metacognition (CEAP, critical pedagogy and critical thinking) (7.1.1.3.2).

## **7.1.2 Criticality and overarching theme 'Sociological and Cultural Awareness'**

### *7.1.2.1 First Teaching Phase*

In Phase One three main signs of criticality related to sociological and cultural awareness have been identified and will be discussed next. The first one derives from critical pedagogy and consists of having a sceptical attitude to totalising discourse (7.1.2.1.1). The second one derives from the critical thinking tradition and involves becoming aware of the constructive nature of discourses and practices (7.1.2.1.2). Finally, the third sign of criticality will be discussed in the light of critical theory and critical thinking and involves expressing discontent with either their own or the foreign educational-socio-cultural practice (7.1.2.1.3):

#### 7.1.2.1.1 Critical pedagogy: Sceptical attitude to totalising discourse

With regards to this meaning of criticality, Alfie, one of my students, expressed a sceptical attitude towards totalising discourse which claimed that British people have a negative perception of Chinese students. His teacher had told him so and he allowed himself to doubt it and asked me if this was true, my opinion. This sceptical attitude is alluded to by Freire (2011) as integral to being critical. Freire (ibid.) argues that it is vital to question clichés and totalising discourse, especially neoliberal discourse which makes us believe that everyone gets richer when in reality only a few do while the majority get poorer. Also most conceptualisations of critical

thinking concur that critical thinking entails having a sceptical attitude and disposition (Cf. McPeck, 1981).

#### 7.1.2.1.2 Critical thinking: Dominant discourse and how things are

With regards to the second socio-cultural aspect of our educative practice, there is evidence of students explaining how things are in their context without acknowledging that what they are saying could be part of the dominant discourse. For example, Ariel explained to me why a democratic approach to teaching might not be appropriate in China by saying that China is not a democracy and that some people are followers and that very few are leaders. In his reflective drawing, Benjamin drew a person playing computer games at his desk and explained it by saying '[this person is] on the screen/ how to communicate with strangers; he is just interested in playing computer games; he doesn't want to play any sports; just to stay at home. I think this is true in China'. He identifies a typical social trend in his context. Finally, when asked about the role of the university, many students said the same as one another which seems to indicate that what they said may be part of the dominant discourse in that context. Explaining and describing how things are in society is a first step towards discussing whether those socio-cultural practices and discourses are part of the dominant discourse in their context, critiquing them, and imagining alternatives. These students were voicing what they saw as common practice and justifying their own points of view. Exposing their drawings in the classroom was already a way of inviting comments and questions. Having space in the first place to express themselves via art was also a way of allowing them to ask their own questions. Brown (1998) within the literature on critical thinking argues that critical thinking consists of enquiring one's own epistemic needs. These students had space to express their epistemic needs but not enough space to enquire them more deeply due to the pressure of having to fulfil a set curriculum. I expressed my dissatisfaction with this and my need for more teacher autonomy in order to promote students' criticality and develop my own too.

#### 7.1.2.1.3 Critical theory and critical thinking: Expressing discontent with either their own or the foreign educational-socio-cultural practice

The third sociological and cultural aspect of our practice refers to expressing discontent with either their own context or the foreign practice they are being part of. Charly expresses resistance to a perceived imposition of foreign values in his three reflective drawings: in one of them he draws a happy chicken, referring to his being happy in his culture and society; secondly he draws eight lotus flowers or fists that refer to the eight students in this group who are ‘fighting’ together against the lecturer who is further away on a boat alone; the third drawing depicts the lecturer as a bat throwing arrows to the Chinese students. Charly seems to be defending his own socio-cultural values and showing resistance to what he seems to perceive as an imposition of foreign values. He is not critically critiquing the foreign pedagogical practice but he is rejecting what he perceives as an imposition. It could be argued that this is the first step towards starting dialogue about this issue. Due to time constraints and my not perceiving or understanding this clearly at the time, this dialogue did not happen but this retrospective analysis is raising my awareness and will shed light into my future practice. Most importantly, it was the application of art in this practice that allowed this student to express himself. This could be a starting point that lecturers can use to advise students on what issues they could explore more deeply, which is in line with Exploratory Practice, by which it is suggested that normal pedagogic practices should be used as research tools (Allwright and Hanks, 2009). In this case, drawings were deployed and could be used in the future as powerful research tools. Other students show discontent with their own education system and awareness of the dominant discourse: ‘universities should not be places to learn from books only, to release stress or to pass and graduate easily’. While other students have repeated what seems to be the dominant discourse in their context, this student is rejecting the dominant discourse by saying what universities should not be like. Identifying what the dominant discourse is and showing discontent with it is already a big step towards critiquing discourse or practices which might cause social suffering (Herzog, 2016). Within critical theory, Herzog (2016) argues that social critique entails becoming aware of social practices which are unjust and cause social suffering. I would suggest that this knowledge is useful for learners and educators when discussing and raising questions about social

practices and discourses, that is, about whether certain practices are unjust or cause social suffering.

In my own diary I reflect on my frustration with having to follow weekly topics and material as it prevented me from thinking critically about my practice and about what my students needed. At times I also felt that some of my students would rather be told what to do instead of making decisions by themselves. I felt uncomfortable with offering a teacher-centred practice and Charly for example seemed uncomfortable with having to make decisions, which was something different from what he was used to doing. Both parties were comfortable with their/ our own way of doing things and the new practice offered a challenge. Said (2004), within the humanist current of thought, and poststructuralists such as Butler (2001) and the second generation of the Frankfurt School, agree on the importance of encountering difference as a way of opening up options and broadening our horizons and developing tolerance. Critical theory's biggest contribution is to acknowledge the struggle of the subject in constructing itself amid a variety of discourses. In the example mentioned above both of us were struggling in the performance of difference. Performing difference can be interpreted in different ways: either as resisting a dominant common practice or discourse; or as an imposition or request, in this case by students or the lecturer. In the latter case, the subject should ideally be open to explore difference and commit to dialogue. In the example from my practice, we could have talked about it more openly acknowledging the struggle we were both experiencing as part of performing a different practice. In both ways of performing difference there is a struggle and each time difference is performed it constitutes a triumph over discourse we reject and naturally imposes itself onto us. As I have mentioned dialoguing about the struggle of performing difference, identifying dominant discourses, thinking of alternative discourses and practices and critiquing unjust discourses and practices is part of developing sociological and cultural awareness which is constitutive of developing criticality or a critical attitude.

Discoursing on critical thinking, Brown (1998) argues that critical thinking is literacy; and that the end of education is critical thinking (*ibid.*: 187). He critiques education systems that rely on rote learning, standardisation, whole-school performance and standardised quality control; and argues for 'more flexible patterns of education offering examples of good practice in which the epistemic needs of

children have a secure place' (ibid.:186). 'The critical feature of the critical traditions is commitment to dialogue governed by a search for agreement about principles of sound reasoning which can unite the differing conceptual perspectives of individuals' (ibid.:187). I must add that Brown (1998) acknowledges the fact that not all cultures and societies have developed the critical tradition and thus some are less prepared to exercise critical thinking. 'The enhancement of critical thought must be at least as much the need for social and institutional reform as about educational method; about conceptions of the role of education in society and the individual in society' (ibid.:157). 'Critical thinking must be recognised as the basis for a critique of education systems and for an assertion of the priority of their role in sustaining the critical traditions above other social objectives' (ibid.: 158). In other words, Brown (ibid.) acknowledges the societal and cultural aspect of critical thinking; critical thinking happens by maintaining and offering access to a critical tradition.

#### *7.1.2.2 Second Teaching Phase*

In the second phase of my teaching practice several socio-cultural issues emerged which I will discuss in relation to criticality next. In particular, I will discuss students presenting information about their context as facts and the potential of them questioning their beliefs as they expose them in posters in the classroom, in the light of critical pedagogy (7.1.2.2.1); students' consistent curiosity about how things are in the new context and comparison with their own context, or the value of experiencing difference in the light of critical theory, critical thinking and the philosophical critical tradition (7.1.2.2.2); their critiquing aspects of their own culture and society and having thirst for change and improvement (7.1.2.2.3); and acknowledging the struggle of performing difference, both in the light of critical theory (7.1.2.2.4):

##### 7.1.2.2.1 Critical pedagogy: Students presenting information about their society and culture as facts

In Phase Two when students investigated their own and the foreign education systems, one group's poster shows statements about their own education system presented as facts. Within Critical Pedagogy, Freire (2011) warns us of the dangers

of presenting information as if it was true in all cases, of totalising discourse and clichés, and of the role of education in tackling this problem. However, having this poster on the wall and providing space for dialogue about its content allowed everyone to think about it, ask questions and question some of the statements presented as facts. Within the critical thinking tradition, being critical is often referred to as having a suspicious attitude or disposition to discourse. What these students were saying about their own education system was based on their common knowledge and experience, and this task allowed them to expose and examine those beliefs. McPeck (1981) argues that in order to be critical, a person must have knowledge of the epistemic foundations of the discipline they are examining – in this case, education. However, providing students with space to work with their own beliefs, examining where their beliefs come from and raising questions about the truth of their beliefs, is a way of promoting the development of students' critical attitude or disposition.

#### 7.1.2.2.2 Critical theory, critical thinking and philosophical critical tradition: Students exploring their own epistemic questions regarding societal and cultural aspects of their own and the new context

Regarding the students' experience of a different educational culture in the UK, they are curious about the new environment and consistently explore and reflect on the differences between the new context and their own Chinese context. Regarding the classroom experience, Mary, one of the students, created a drawing of the sitting arrangement in this classroom context and in China. The visual images are powerful and convey immediate meaning. At the same time, without imposing any values, the images invite the viewer's own critical thinking, reflection, and response. In her reflective writing, Lauren highlights the differences between these two ways of teaching and learning. In the face of a different experience these students feel compelled to expose these differences, talk about them and think about them. Discoursing on humanism and criticism, Said (2004) argues that having experiences of difference is of vital importance for human beings to develop tolerance and a better understanding of the world and human beings in it.

During this educative experience students expressed their wanting to know more about the British education system and I invited a British colleague to come to the classroom to talk to my students. After they asked her questions about the British education system, some of them asked me questions about the Argentinian education system – where I come from. Within the critical tradition and discoursing on critical thinking, Brown (1998) argues that human beings' curiosity is natural and that the role of education is to ensure that learners' enquiries of their own epistemic questions have a secure place. He claims that critical thinking is concerned with dialogue and the inquiry of one's own epistemic questions. Following Brown's words, my students were developing their critical thinking by having opportunities to enquire about their own questions and to talk about them with invited guests in the classroom, with their own classmates, and with experts outside of the classroom as when a group of students who was exploring homosexuality in the UK asked me about an expert at this university they had found on the website and I encouraged them to go and interview her during class time. Following the same critical tradition and discoursing on the relationship between philosophy and education, Tubbs (2004) concurs with Brown's argument that education should maintain the critical tradition by which the learners' epistemic needs and dialogue have a secure place.

#### 7.1.2.2.3 Critical theory: Critiquing aspects of own culture and society and having thirst for change and improvement

When sharing her group's enquiry into the university system in China, Estela talks about the characteristics of the university in China and lists aspects they do not like and would rather change and presents their ideal university. Also after experiencing a different way of teaching and learning in the UK she writes in one of her reflective accounts that she now perceives that the Chinese education system needs to change, to be more humanistic. This resonates with critical pedagogy and critical EAP which are concerned with creating hope and imagining alternatives for a better world; and with critical theory, which is concerned with social critique and with becoming aware of the way social discourses and realities are constructed and how they in turn construct the way people are. The concept of difference is important in critical theory; performing difference or doing something new opens up options and contributes to us seeing that something different is possible; and that while we are

made by what we experience, we can also construct discourse, reality, and experience (Vazquez, 2011). When Estela experiences a different university in the foreign society, it seems that she feels empowered to fiercely denounce or critique the aspects of the university life in her context that her group feel need to be more democratic and humanistic.

#### 7.1.2.2.4 Critical theory: Acknowledging the struggle of performing difference

Lauren, on the other hand, told me, as I expressed in my diary, that she does not like exploring the same topic for more than one lesson and that she would rather do a different topic every lesson. In comparison, in the face of performing a different experience in a different context, Estela likes some aspects of the foreign system and realises that this is needed in her context, whereas Lauren expresses her not liking aspects of this new classroom experience which involves enquiring their own epistemic questions which usually takes longer than one session. At the same time, in her reflective writing, Lauren usually expresses her liking of this new way of being in charge of the learning in the classroom. This seeming contradiction seems to imply the struggle of the subject in the performance of difference, alluded to within critical theory. While appreciating being active and in charge in the classroom, Lauren also expressed preferring a more mechanical pedagogical experience at times. This destabilisation is constitutive of a critical practice (Grey, 2009) which seeks to open up options, uncover the status quo, and question all that is taken for granted.

One group of students who explored and compared the role of the family in China and in the UK, referred to this struggle in a conversation I had with them when I walked around the groups asking them what aspect of the culture and society they were enquiring about. They explained to me that in China, it is common for young people to take care of their parents as they become older, which makes it hard for them to travel and live a more independent life. While acknowledging that this was a burden for some youngsters, they also admitted that it is a 'sweet burden' for others because of the positive aspects of this tradition. They explicitly said it is a struggle to deviate from the norm by acting differently; if they do, they will feel socially excluded and condemned. Acknowledging and talking about the struggle of

performing difference constitutes criticality. The nuances (Moore, 2014) and difficulties of critiquing, resisting and changing are part of performing criticality.

### *7.1.2.3 Third Teaching Phase*

One socio-cultural feature that emerged in the third phase of my practice was resisting aspects of the new way of teaching and learning in the classroom and suggesting instead learning in a way that is more in line with the dominant and more instrumental educational classroom practice. This will be discussed in the light of critical theory and critical thinking next (7.1.2.3.1):

#### 7.1.2.3.1 Critical theory and critical thinking: Resisting difference or the supremacy of the dominant discourse

Implementing changes or doing things differently from what is stipulated by the dominant discourse, which is often influenced by neoliberalism, accountability and homogeneity, is challenging. Some students expressed their resistance to aspects of this disruptive practice (Grey, 2009) in their reflective writing. While acknowledging the benefits of this new way of teaching and learning, Tamara said that she does not learn as much from her classmates' presentations and explanations as she would from the teacher, neither from having long discussions about articles in preparation for their essay writing. She would rather focus shortly on specific content each class. This resonates again with Grey's (2009) disruptive educative EAP practice which consisted of creating the learning conditions for students to perform difference regarding gender, class, and race, to challenge these given categories and raise awareness of the constructive nature of discourse, practice and identity and of the transformative power performing difference can have on our lives. The practice that Tamara criticised was disruptive. Her response shows the power that dominant discourses, 'hegemony and fixity' (Grey, 2009:131) exert on us and the difficulty questioning it and creating more humanistic, and democratic ways of being and acting poses on some students. Having a dialogue about this would constitute critical thinking (Brown, 1998; Freire, 2011); a dialogue in which the lecturer and the student give their reasons for choosing or criticising a disruptive practice, aiming at 'unit[ing] the[ir] differing conceptual perspectives' (Brown, 1998:187). In my own

diary, there is also evidence of my own questions and doubts about the efficacy of implementing this innovative, disruptive, educative practice, which shows that doing this is challenging for everyone including the lecturer but nonetheless worth it. Discussing everyone's perspectives, which constitutes exercising critical thinking, is a way forward.

#### *7.1.2.4 Summary*

In this section five sociocultural features that emerged in the three consecutive phases of my teaching practice have been discussed in the light of criticality. One of the features that appeared along the three phases was the students' discontent, critique or resistance to aspects of either their own or the foreign socio-cultural and educative practice. In some cases their resistance was to neoliberal practices but in some other cases they resisted disruptive, democratic and more humanistic practices. In other words, sometimes the neoliberal dominant discourse spoke louder to some participants, while for other participants the new disruptive practice inspired them to express a desire for change, to develop more democratic practices in their context. This sign of criticality was discussed in the light of critical theory and critical thinking. Another feature that appeared in Phase Two was students' awareness of the struggle of performing difference, which was discussed in the light of critical theory. Thirdly, in Phase One, some students withheld judgement and showed a sceptical attitude to totalising discourse, which is a critical sign within critical pedagogy. A fourth feature that appeared strongly in Phase Two and was discussed in the light of critical pedagogy, critical thinking, the philosophical critical tradition and critical theory was: students enquiring about their own epistemic doubts emerging from their lived experiences of difference in the new context, developing their curiosity, and comparing socio-educational practices between their own and the current foreign contexts. Fifthly, in Phases One and Two, students engaged in discussing and explaining how things were and worked in their own socio-educational context very often as if that was true in all cases, that is, without acknowledging the existence of different practices within their context. This final point was discussed in the light of critical pedagogy and critical thinking.

### **7.1.3 Criticality and overarching theme ‘Others’**

#### *7.1.3.1 First Teaching Phase*

Below the features of my practice related to ‘others’ will be developed in relation to criticality. Seven links between criticality and ‘others’ will be presented below: Dialogue in an atmosphere of joint enquiry (7.1.3.1.1); testing one’s own opinions and asserting one’s autonomy through dialogue (7.1.3.1.2); criticality: developing understanding of a multitude of voices through dialogue (7.1.3.1.3); criticality: questioning privileged, and including marginalised, world views (7.1.3.1.4); reflecting on one’s own learning with others (7.1.3.1.5); formalisations of thought as prompts for dialogue and developing understanding (7.1.3.1.6); and critical thinking as a societal endeavour: being open to dialogue and differing voices (7.1.3.1.7).

##### 7.1.3.1.1 Critical thinking and CEAP: Dialogue in an atmosphere of joint enquiry

In Phase One, Elizabeth expressed the value of both developing one’s own views and sharing them with others, in her reflective drawing (drawing 12). In other words, she highlighted both individual and communal development in the classroom as gains from the educative experience. Some of the phrases she included in her drawing are ‘everyone has own ideas’ and ‘PSE/ family’. She also drew each member of the class both at the top and the bottom of her drawing. This resonates with Brown’s (1998) argument that critical thinking is dialogue in an atmosphere of joint enquiry. In this sense critical thinking is social and cultural; Brown (ibid.) argues that critical thinking is literacy; and that not all societies have developed this critical tradition and therefore some are less prepared to exercise critical thinking. He argues that social institutions have an enormous responsibility in maintaining and offering access to this tradition; if not, critical thinking is in danger of atrophy. Also, my students argued that when seeking answers to their own questions by asking others in class, they obtained new ideas from them, which contributed to expanding their understanding of the question they were exploring. Within Critical EAP, Chun (2015) argues that CEAP is concerned with power and meaning making, and with engaging with the everyday in this process. In other words, CEAP is concerned with providing students with opportunities to make meaning of the subject matter in their own ways, from their own knowledge and experience of the everyday. As my

students said, they responded to each other's questions in their own unique ways, from their own knowledge and experience.

#### 7.1.3.1.2 Critical pedagogy: Testing one's own opinions and asserting one's autonomy through dialogue

Within critical pedagogy, Freire (2011) argues that a critical pedagogy encourages learners to make decisions, evaluating the reasons for choosing A instead of B, and stresses the social aspect of making decisions by arguing that it is when confronted with others that our opinions are tested; in other words, by expressing one's views and opinions to others one clarifies those views to oneself as well, and in turn asserts one's autonomy.

#### 7.1.3.1.3 Critical thinking and social democracy: developing understanding of a multitude of voices through dialogue

When asked about what criticality is or what it is to be critical, all the students in this Phase referred to the social aspect of criticality. Charly said that being critical is asking questions to the speaker so that they can be more specific; in other words, by asking questions to the speaker one helps the speaker be more precise, developing their own and the audience's understanding better. In other words, being critical is developing individual and mutual understanding by being more precise and accurate in a dialogic way, very much in the way of the philosophical critical tradition of Socrates. Ariel said that being critical is welcoming all voices rather than 'a quarrel of voices'. Alice said that being critical is listening to each other and learning from each other; it is not about disagreeing but opening up options, views. Elizabeth said that criticality is to communicate well, to know how to disagree well, implying that despite disagreeing with each other, two people can still appreciate and welcome their differing views. Barbara said that being critical is sharing each other's views and opinions, regardless of whether one agrees with those views or not. This resonates with Brown's (1998) argument that critical thinking is 'commitment to dialogue governed by a search for agreement about principles of sound reasoning which can unite the differing conceptual perspectives of individuals' (Brown, 1998:187). Discoursing on democracy, Koczanowicz (nd.; 2008; 2014) proposes 'a

concept of democracy as social dialogue that pursues understanding rather than agreement', which is in line with the definitions of critical thinking presented here.

#### 7.1.3.1.4 CEAP: questioning privileged, and including marginalised, world views

In my diary there is evidence of my understanding criticality to be concerned with widening world views, questioning privileged views, and including marginalised world views in classroom discussions. For example, in a discussion by which security was only portrayed in a good light, that is, as necessary to protect people, I tried to formulate a counter view which sees security as dividing people and creating borders (Rampton, 2017). This resonates with Critical EAP, Benesch's (2001) and Chun's (2015) works, both of which present classroom practice examples of incorporating marginalised views of the world in the curriculum; in Benesch's case, it was feminist literature, and in Chun's case, counter-hegemonic views of globalisation that were incorporated in the syllabus. As has been said earlier in this work, Critical EAP has been informed by critical pedagogy and critical theory. Therefore, the three currents of thought are concerned with making marginalised voices visible, uncovering the richness of differing voices, doing justice to all voices and social groups, and in so doing critiquing dominant, privileged discourses.

#### 7.1.3.1.5 Critical pedagogy: Reflecting on one's own learning with others

Freire (2011) argues that a critical education demands consistent reflection on practice, examining one's practice. In this respect, I asked my students to reflect on their learning in writing and via drawing or painting. When asked about whether reflecting on their learning had benefited them, they said it did. One of the students referred to reflecting on his learning as talking about his learning issues with others; in other words, reflecting with others or sharing his reflections with others. Articulating one's thoughts, sharing them with others, using meta-language to express themselves better, all of these skills involve others and refer to the interpersonal, dialogical aspect of criticality.

#### 7.1.3.1.6 Formalisations of thought as prompts for dialogue and developing understanding

Students' formalisations of thought in the form of posters, reflective emails and drawings, reports and essays constitute their own voices which can be further developed or critiqued in dialogue with new actors, new voices, and others. Discoursing on Merlau Ponty's critique of absolute reason, Langan (1966) argues that any formalisation of thought is partial, incomplete but still important as one's legacy on earth. Regarding their drawings, my students said that they were good prompts to help them speak, articulate their ideas and thoughts. Wu (2002; 2005) lists all the functions posters and drawings can play in the classroom. In *Exploratory Practice and pedagogy for autonomy*, posters are often used as tools to share and talk about work in progress. My students' reflective paintings can be considered products with an aesthetic value as well.

#### 7.1.3.1.7 Critical thinking as a societal endeavour: being open to dialogue and differing voices

Brown (1998) refers to critical thinking not only as an individual enterprise but also as a societal endeavour. When he claims that societies that have developed a critical tradition are more likely to practise critical thinking, he is saying that human beings are part of groups, communities which shape their habits and thus if the community follows a critical tradition its members will tend to develop and perform critical thinking. Of course, individual members of communities can make changes but as has been acknowledged within critical theory, doing so is a struggle (Grey, 2009). If everyone in a group exercises critical thinking, they are all open to dialogue, accepting differing voices.

#### *7.1.3.2 Second Teaching Phase*

The following five interpersonal aspects of criticality will be developed next: Expressing and sharing one's views with others: Experiencing difference and novelty, disruption and discomfort, and participation and freedom (7.1.3.2.1); a heated political debate in the classroom: democratic dialogue for agreement or understanding? (7.1.3.2.2); joint enquiry: exploring topics of their own choice

together (7.1.3.2.3); students at centre-stage as sources of inspiration and knowledge to one another (7.1.3.2.4); and integrating differing pedagogical practices (7.1.3.2.5).

#### 7.1.3.2.1 Expressing and sharing one's views with others: Experiencing difference and novelty, disruption and discomfort, and participation and freedom

In her written reflection at the end of the first week (Extract 54), Fatima wrote:

‘I think I learned a lot and developed my oral language ability and my elaborative faculty. [I've had] opportunities to speak and think. I feel novel and maybe a bit uncomfortable, but very free. I can express my views and share them with others’.

In other words, she felt free to express her views and share them with others, novel because it was a new experience of participation and democracy in the classroom for her, and a bit uncomfortable because this practice constituted a challenge to what was acceptable and normal practice for her until then. This resonates generally with CEAP and critical theory and in particular with Grey's (2009) acknowledgement that feeling ‘a bit uncomfortable’ is part and parcel of performing difference and partaking in a disruptive practice. In other words, it is expected that students will feel differently if they do something different from what they are used to or is common practice. At the same time, Fatima acknowledges feeling ‘novel’ and ‘free’ in the classroom because she ‘can express [her] views and share them with others’. This was a disruptive practice because it broke with the stipulated classroom order of a traditional classroom practice by encouraging students to explore their own questions, discussing them with each other, sharing them, finding material, being in charge, moving around. Doing this constitutes a critical practice, which is in line with Critical EAP and critical theory, which are concerned with challenging discourses which threaten the co-existence and acceptance of other discourses and ways of being. In Fatima's example, thinking, speaking, discussing, expressing one's views and sharing them with others openly in the classroom constituted a new way of being, which would be unacceptable in her context and which is threatened in the current education context in the UK, which is more and more marketised, homogenised, and neoliberalised (Block et al., 2012; Holmwood, 2011; Halfman &

Hans, 2017). This example also resonates with critical pedagogy and critical thinking. Regarding critical pedagogy, Freire (2011) remind us that it is when explaining our thoughts to others that they become clearer to us and tested and in turn our authority, autonomy and self is asserted. This idea of feeling empowered by feeling free to express oneself and share one's ideas with others is what an education for participation, citizenry and democracy is about (Dewey, 1916; Giroux, 2011). Within critical thinking, Brown (1998) argues that critical thinking is enquiry of one's own epistemic needs and commitment to dialogue, whose principles of reason unite and respect differing views.

#### 7.1.3.2.2 A heated political debate in the classroom: democratic dialogue for agreement or understanding?

Another example of the overarching theme 'others' in this phase is a group's presentation on democracy and China and the dialogue they had with the audience, which was video-recorded and subsequently transcribed. I had provided students with options related to democracy for them to choose from and explore. This group chose democracy in China. Several members of the group presented their work which included a historical account of the developments in the organisation of the country from dynasties to the current communist party. One group member, Julian, involved the audience by asking them if they thought that the revolutions in China had been successful or a failure. He argued that the transformation of China into what it is currently had been successful if compared with democratic systems around the world, which in his view had failed. Other audience members felt compelled to say that in China there is still no complete freedom of expression and therefore the present system is not as successful as Julian seems to indicate. This presentation generated a heated debate among everyone in the classroom. Those who participated tended to stress that what they were saying was 'just' their own opinions and therefore they were not speaking for others, perhaps to indicate that they were not adhering to any existent discourse on the subject. Their involvement indicates that this was a sensitive and relevant topic for them about their own context, experience and situation. They were all voicing their views, and there was certain tension, as if guided by search for a winning position. In his work on social democracy, Koczanowicz (nd.; 2008; 2014) enlightens us by reminding us that the aim of social democratic dialogue is not to reach agreement or consensus but understanding. If we

bear this in mind as educators and learners, discussions of political or sensitive issues in the classroom will happen more often and do not have to be threatening. At the time, I was happy to see that my learners were so involved, but I did not know how to deal with the seeming tension or quarrel of viewpoints. Now, looking back at my practice in the light of the literature I find answers to many of my questions at the time.

#### 7.1.3.2.3 Joint enquiry: exploring topics of their own choice together

In her reflective drawing (Drawing 21), Veronica highlighted three tasks she had done in the course: learning about the British education system; doing a research project of their own choice involving analysing data and writing a report; and exploring aspects of the British culture of their own choice and sharing their insights via posters. All these tasks had something in common: that the students would work together as is shown by the word ‘cooperation’ in the centre of the drawing and the picture of two people discussing at a table, ‘brainstorming’ ideas, ‘taking notes’ and ‘writing [them] down’. The drawing also shows some kind of materialisation as a result of cooperating with others, a kind of product that she refers to as what she has learned. In other words, she is expressing her having learned something tangible out of cooperating with others. Finally she expresses her willingness to continue exploring topics of their own choice together. In other words, their own choices are important; listening to one another and learning from one another regarding topics of their own choice seem to be empowering. In Brown’s (1998) words, these are examples of students developing critical thinking as they enquire their own epistemic doubts through dialogue in an atmosphere of joint enquiry. Taking each other’s experience, knowledge and epistemic doubts seriously is empowering and creates hope that their questions are relevant and worth exploring. Discussing their epistemic doubts with others is part of the commitment to dialogue necessary in the exercise of critical thinking (Brown, 1998). Creating hope is one of the aims of critical pedagogy (Freire, 2011), as is expressed in the name ‘pedagogy for hope’ (Giroux, 2011; McDougall et al., 2012; Breault, 2013) and of critical EAP (Benesch, 2001).

#### 7.1.3.2.4 Students as sources of inspiration and knowledge to one another

In her reflective writing, Estela expressed that ‘after exchanging and sharing, we got new inspiration from other groups and expanded our knowledge about this topic’. In

other words, she highlights the value of others in the learning process, that is, gaining inspiration and knowledge by exchanging and sharing their work. Acknowledging the learners as knowledge producers rather than mere consumers is in line with exploratory practice, pedagogy for autonomy, and criticality, in particular, critical pedagogy, which seeks to empower the voiceless or those people who tend to be marginalised and unheard. When homogeneity, audits, and accountability are the priority, students and teachers are often neglected, their voices, understanding and knowledge are neglected in favour of grand-narratives or external voices. Being inspired resonates with an education in which hope, imagination and creativity are at the centre, which involves learners and teachers in charge of their own educative practice as knowledge producers, seeking to understand their own epistemic doubts. All critical frameworks aim at bringing the voices of main actors in any social practice centre-stage: within critical thinking, via enquiring one's own epistemic doubts and through dialogue; within arts-informed practices, students express their own insights via painting and drawing; within critical pedagogy, learners and teachers embark on enquiring their own social realities, bringing in different voices, uncovering injustices and raising awareness of the constructive nature of reality; within critical theory, via developing awareness of the constructive nature of reality too, of the struggle it is to perform difference (Grey, 2009) within the discourse one is immersed and at the same time of the emancipatory power of engaging in disruptive practices that challenge static, social suffering-generating, oppressive discourses and practices.

#### 7.1.3.2.5 Integrating differing pedagogical practices

The last example from Phase Two regarding 'others' that I will mention is Lauren's reflective writing during the first week. She said that in her future teaching practice she 'will integrate the advantages of both the Eastern and Western teaching methods'. This integration of methods and voices resonates with criticality as understood by my students in Phase One. They all refer to being critical as listening to all voices, learning from them, and enriching practices by integrating differing voices. Critical practices are concerned with becoming aware of alternatives, expanding understanding and Lauren's words are an example of this.

### *7.1.3.3 Third Teaching Phase*

Next I will present the students' perspectives regarding 'others', in the light of the literature on criticality, in particular, valuing discussing ideas and sources about issues that are relevant for those involved (7.1.3.3.1); and sharing the insights gained from their own enquiries with other classmates (7.1.3.3.2). Finally a discussion of the affective aspect of learning mentioned by some students will be presented (7.1.3.3.1).

#### 7.1.3.3.1 CEAP and critical theory: Engaging in discussions of issues from personal experience and knowledge

In her reflective writing in the second week of the course, Sabrina says that what impressed her the most of this educative experience was discussing topics in groups and briefly presenting that discussion to the rest of the class. She highlighted learning more about her classmates' opinions, ideas and elaborations on the same topic. She was also impressed by the lecturer's participation in the discussion and the 'chemical' interactions some students and I had. She argued that these discussions made her think more deeply as they were not aimed at brain storming ideas only, implying that brainstorming was a practice she knew and would practise in lessons. Her words resonate with CEAP, critical pedagogy, and critical thinking, which stress students' enquiries and explorations of issues which are relevant to their experiences, knowledge and realities. Chun (2015) argues that CEAP is concerned with engaging students' everyday knowledge in the process of making meaning. He claims that students are critical when they respond to texts and make sense of texts in personal ways, from their knowledge and experience. The classroom discussion Sabrina referred to was about whether the industry should have a say in the university curriculum. Based on their own experiences as university students and future employees some students expressed their views and positions on this issue passionately. This issue resonated with their own university life and future employment and some had a lot to say about this. Sabrina found this novel and felt enlightened by it. This experience of difference at the same time resonates with critical theory, which highlights the importance of becoming aware of new ways of seeing the world and being (Said, 2004; Vazquez, 2011; Grey, 2009).

#### 7.1.3.3.2 Critical tradition, critical thinking and critical pedagogy: Talking about and sharing their work with others

John's highlight of this module was having opportunities to talk about and share their research and work with others in the classroom in a relaxing atmosphere. He highlights feeling unconstrained and liberated by being able to listen to his classmates' ideas and talk about his own ideas with them. He said that this is what is different from other modules. What he says is in line with the philosophical critical tradition:

For Socrates there was no distinction between philosophy and education. To engage in dialectical thinking, or to rigorously follow the path of one's doubts, was to do philosophy and to be learning at one and the same time. (Tubbs, 2004: xiv).

In other words, by sharing and talking about what they have researched they open up space for clarifying weak arguments, testing their own ideas and learning, and raising doubts and further questions. This way of learning was what John valued the most from this educative experience. Tubbs (ibid.) argues that this learning is the same as doing philosophy following the critical tradition of Socratic dialogical thinking. Critical thinking also follows this critical tradition; in other words, following this critical tradition, critical thinking involves enquiring one's own epistemic doubts and a commitment to dialogue (Brown, 1998).

Freire (2011) argues that it is when sharing one's opinions that one has a chance to test one's own opinions. In Phase One, Charly said that when asking questions to a speaker one helps them to be more specific and that this was being critical. In other words, through dialogue, students have a chance to clarify and test their own opinions and be more precise. In Freire's (ibid.) words, a critical pedagogy is conducive to changing the quality of one's curiosity, from an ingenious to a more critical curiosity. In other words, the quality of one's curiosity becomes more critical as one becomes more certain about one's findings. Others play a role in helping one test one's opinions and become more certain about them.

#### 7.1.3.3.3 Critical theory: Bonding and making friends

Another aspect of the overarching theme ‘others’ relates to ‘making friends, studying and progressing together’ as Tamara said with reference to her reflective drawing (Drawing 23). In Phase One some students also mentioned making friends as one of the functions of the university. In Phase Three, Gabriel also reflects on liking conversing with Ulyses, a classmate from Nigeria, because he is extroverted and friendly. These references to socialising and making friends refer to the affective aspect of learning. Grey (2009) argues that if affection is regarded in the classroom, students might be more willing to perform difference more easily without feeling that they might be judged. These examples do not refer to performing difference though. In the case of Tamara, her reference to her two new Chinese female friends could also be understood as resisting the new pedagogical practice as she has expressed previously in her reflective writing. Drawing friends from the same community and culture could be understood as showing comfort in what she knows and is familiar with. Gabriel’s words indicate that he values being extroverted and friendly in his classmate. Unlike Grey’s (ibid.) EAP practice which focused on providing students with opportunities to perform difference regarding identity, my own teaching practice was not aimed at exploring identity in particular. However, Grey’s (ibid.) work has served as a comparative example to understand these examples from my practice better. These are examples of the natural human tendency to bond with others, to develop healthy relationships and to work together in the classroom.

#### *7.1.1.4 Summary*

In sum, the interpersonal aspect of criticality has been developed phase by phase. In Phase One, seven links between criticality and ‘others’ have been developed, namely, dialogue in an atmosphere of joint enquiry (7.1.3.1.1); testing one’s own opinions and asserting one’s autonomy through dialogue (7.1.3.1.2); criticality: developing understanding of a multitude of voices through dialogue (7.1.3.1.3); criticality: questioning privileged, and including marginalised, world views (7.1.3.1.4); reflecting on one’s own learning with others (7.1.3.1.5); formalisations of thought as prompts for dialogue and developing understanding (7.1.3.1.6); and critical thinking as a societal endeavour: being open to dialogue and differing voices

(7.1.3.1.7). In Phase Two, five interpersonal aspects of criticality have been presented, namely, expressing and sharing one's views with others: Experiencing difference and novelty, disruption and discomfort, and participation and freedom (7.1.3.2.1); a heated political debate in the classroom: democratic dialogue for agreement or understanding? (7.1.3.2.2); joint enquiry: exploring topics of their own choice together (7.1.3.2.3); students at centre-stage as sources of inspiration and knowledge to one another (7.1.3.2.4); and integrating differing pedagogical practices (7.1.3.2.5). Finally, in Phase Three: three interpersonal aspects of criticality have been developed in my practice, namely, engaging in discussions of issues from personal experience and knowledge (7.1.3.3.1); talking about and sharing one's own work with others (7.1.3.3.2); and bonding and making friends (7.1.3.3.3).

From a comparative perspective across the three phases, (1) talking about, expressing and sharing one's own views, work and learning with others is an interpersonal feature of criticality across all phases of my practice. (2) Discussing issues from personal experience and knowledge featured strongly in Phases Two and Three. (3) Enquiring jointly; (4) integrating differing, marginalised and multiple voices and world-views; and (5) developing understanding through dialogue are three interpersonal aspects of criticality that feature in Phases One and Two. Finally, in Phase One, the following are also mentioned: (6) testing one's own opinions and asserting one's autonomy; (7) questioning privileged discourses; (8) critical thinking as a societal endeavour; and (9) formalising thought as prompts for dialogue.

Having discussed the individual, socio-cultural and interpersonal aspects of criticality in the three phases of my teaching practice in the first section of this chapter, I will now move to the second section of this chapter where I will discuss those aspects of criticality in my practice in relation to: autonomy (section 7.2.1), exploratory practice (section 7.2.2), and arts-enriched methods (section 7.2.3).

	Phase One	Phase Two	Phase Three
The individual aspect of criticality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Affection; disruption; difference; and awareness of self</li> <li>(2) Contentment with learner-centred practices and developing awareness of the self</li> <li>(3) Empowerment for social justice and change; developing one's own voice; personal engagement in learning; self awareness; metacognition</li> <li>(4) Freedom, decision-making, authority, and self-development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Engaging the everyday in meaning-making</li> <li>(2) Enquiring one's own questions; self-development; developing the quality of one's own curiosity</li> <li>(3) Developing critical curiosity and a suspicious attitude to totalising discourse; engaging with expert knowledge</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Affection; disruption; difference; and awareness of self</li> <li>(2) Empowerment for social justice and change; developing one's own voice; personal engagement in learning; self awareness; metacognition</li> </ul>
The socio-cultural aspect of criticality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Sceptical attitude to totalising discourse</li> <li>(2) Dominant discourse and how things work</li> <li>(3) Expressing discontent with either their own or the foreign educational-socio-cultural practice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Presenting information about own society and culture as facts</li> <li>(2) Exploring own epistemic questions about socio-cultural aspects of both own and foreign contexts</li> <li>(3) Critiquing aspects of own culture and society and having thirst for change and improvement</li> <li>(4) Acknowledging the struggle of performing difference</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Resisting difference or the supremacy of the dominant discourse</li> </ul>
The interpersonal aspect of criticality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Dialogue in an atmosphere of joint enquiry</li> <li>(2) Testing one's own opinions and asserting one's autonomy through dialogue</li> <li>(3) Criticality: developing understanding of a multitude of voices through dialogue</li> <li>(4) Criticality: questioning privileged, and including marginalised, world views</li> <li>(5) Reflecting on one's own learning with others</li> <li>(6) Formalisations of thought as prompts for dialogue and developing understanding</li> <li>(7) Critical thinking as a societal endeavour: being open to dialogue and differing voices</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Expressing and sharing one's views with others: Experiencing difference and novelty, disruption and discomfort, and participation and freedom</li> <li>(2) A heated political debate in the classroom: democratic dialogue for agreement or understanding?</li> <li>(3) Joint enquiry: exploring topics of their own choice together</li> <li>(4) Students at centre-stage as sources of inspiration and knowledge to one another</li> <li>(5) Integrating differing pedagogical practices</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Engaging in discussions of issues from personal experience and knowledge</li> <li>(2) Talking about and sharing one's own work with others</li> <li>(3) Bonding and making friends</li> </ul>

Table 5

## **7.2 Developing Criticality via Pedagogy for Autonomy, Exploratory Practice and Arts-enriched Methods**

When I started this study I thought that a pedagogy for autonomy, exploratory practice and arts-enriched methods could be conducive to criticality. In order to check to what extent this was the case, I explored my own teaching practice and while reading the literature on criticality I also added aspects of criticality as I understood it at the time of teaching each successive cycle or phase. After having analysed and discussed the synergies between what I did in the classroom and criticality as explored in the literature review, I will focus on discussing what aspects of what I did in the classroom constitute a pedagogy for autonomy, exploratory practice and arts-enriched methods and to what extent they contributed to criticality development.

### **7.2.1 Criticality and Pedagogy for Autonomy**

In this section I will attempt to respond to the part of the second research question which enquires as to what extent and in what ways a pedagogy for autonomy can be conducive to developing criticality. Below I will present the main signs of criticality across the three phases of my practice (as Table 5 shows) and discuss them in the light of a pedagogy for autonomy. The purpose of doing so is to show whether the signs of criticality in my practice are features of an autonomous classroom and if so to say that those features of an autonomous pedagogy were conducive to criticality. First the individual signs of criticality will be discussed; second, the socio-cultural signs of criticality; and third, the interpersonal signs of criticality will be discussed, each in the light of a pedagogy for autonomy.

#### *7.2.1.1 Individual aspect of criticality*

The headings below refer back to the signs of criticality discussed in the previous section of this chapter, which are summarised in Table 5. Next I will discuss five

signs of individual criticality that I have selected across the three teaching phases in the light of pedagogy for autonomy:

#### 7.2.1.1.1 Disruption, difference and self-awareness

A pedagogy for autonomy is disruptive in the sense that it breaks with more traditional teacher-centred pedagogical practices. By creating spaces for learners to be centre-stage, talking to each other, searching for material, setting their own agendas and organising themselves to pursue them, a pedagogy for autonomy constitutes a disruptive practice. In my own practice this was a vivid element along the three cycles. Within the framework of Critical EAP and drawing on critical theory, Grey (2009) argues that creating a disruptive pedagogical practice is a critical practice which aims at opening up spaces to question assumptions, to think differently, to perform differently. In this sense a pedagogy for autonomy was disruptive because it was different for my students, it broke with the teacher-centred educative practice as many students in Phase Two argued; by creating opportunities and space for learners to talk about their work with others in the classroom the focus was on meaning, on learning and understanding. John in Phase Three highlights this as an insight from this learning experience. Thus it can be argued that the disruptive element of a pedagogy for autonomy was conducive to criticality. In other words, disruption, which is a constitutive element of criticality, was part of the autonomy-driven pedagogy deployed in my practice because providing space for students to be in charge of their own learning was not the norm.

#### 7.2.1.1.2 Freedom, decision-making, authority and self-development; enquiring one's own questions; and metacognition

Freire (2011) argues that a critical education supports student decision making; in other words, critical education creates the space for students to make their own decisions accompanying them in this difficult process and in so doing contributing to their own self assertion and authority. Similarly, Brown (1998) argues that critical thinking involves both enquiring one's own epistemic questions and engaging in dialogue with others which lead to developing self-assertion. A pedagogy for autonomy creates the space for learners to think by themselves and together and to

decide what to work on and how to do it, to do it and to evaluate the quality of their answers (Dam, 1995; Tubbs, 2004). Also deciding what to work on based on their own academic needs and on their reflection on their learning relates to metacognition. Metacognition is alluded to by Brown (1998) in reference to critical thinking and by Freire (2011) in reference to a critical pedagogy. Within a pedagogy for autonomy, Dam (1995, 2009), Wenden (1991, 1998) and Little (2012) among others discourse on the value of providing students with tools to develop their metacognitive awareness. My asking students what they are doing in groups, how they are investigating it was intended to make students think and develop their metacognition. Thus decision making, reflection on practice, metacognition, and enquiring one's own questions are all elements of a pedagogy for autonomy which are conducive to criticality. Having said this, while criticality emphasises posing one's own questions, as Exploratory Practice does, as it will be developed in the next section, a pedagogy for autonomy focuses on making one's own decisions about content, ways of working that are relevant to each learner. In other words, within pedagogy for autonomy, student choice of topics and content is the focus rather than students' explorations (referred to within EP) or learners' epistemic enquiries (Tubbs, 2004; Brown, 1998). Within autonomy, choosing what to work on does not necessarily imply to think of questions, even though one could argue that behind an exploration there is always a question. Within criticality, emphasising one's own epistemic enquiry implies investigating one's own questions. McPeck (1981) makes specific reference to essay writing as an appropriate form for students to exercise critical thinking. An essay involves answering a specific question acknowledging different perspectives. In this sense it can be argued that criticality as explored in the literature review seems to be more specific by providing a focus on student enquiry and criticality development.

#### 7.2.1.1.3 Developing the quality of one's curiosity

Enquiring about one's own questions and doubts is synonymous with what Freire (2011) calls developing the quality of one's own curiosity, from an ingenious to a more critical curiosity. It is difficult to say how far my students' curiosity quality was transformed in this continuum. But putting the emphasis on developing the quality of one's curiosity is one of the greatest contributions of criticality to guiding

the educative enterprise. McPeck's (1981) emphasis on essay writing as a tool to develop critical thinking seems to be in line with Freire's critical pedagogy which aims to develop the quality of one's curiosity. The more evidence we have for what we claim the more critical our thinking is. The deeper one's explorations, the more critical the quality of one's curiosity. This point is closely linked with the previous one. As it has been said in the previous point, a pedagogy for autonomy involves encouraging learners to reflect on their academic needs and decide what to work on (Dam, 1995); in other words, to plan and develop their own learning agendas. It is supposed that learners' choices are guided by their curiosity and that the quality of their curiosity is enhanced as they carry out their agendas.

#### 7.2.1.1.4 Developing one's own voice

Like in the previous point, developing one's own voice was a sign of criticality in my practice. In all phases students express their contentment with having space to express what they think, with having a say in what they do in the class, and with developing their own voices in their essays. The first two examples are characteristics of a pedagogy for autonomy, while the latter is a sign of criticality that might not be explicitly highlighted within a pedagogy for autonomy.

#### 7.2.1.1.5 The everyday and expert knowledge

Especially in Phase Two my students explored their own questions arising from their lived experiences in the UK as well as from the programme content which they linked with their own experience and knowledge in their own culture and context. One of the students in her reflective writing said that she felt that they needed to go beyond their own common knowledge and experience of the questions explored. She felt they needed to engage more with expert knowledge. Within pedagogy for autonomy what this student did in her reflection was to be in charge of her own learning pointing out what she thinks she needs to do next. In this sense, the engagement students have with expert knowledge and their own previous knowledge and experience is encouraged within pedagogy for autonomy. By asking students what they will investigate and how they will answer their questions, students are encouraged to think of what their sources of information and knowledge will be.

Within criticality, McPeck (1981) emphasises engagement with expert knowledge while Critical EAP (Benesch, 2001; Chun, 2015) highlights the ways in which students should engage with content: that is, by bringing their own lived experiences and knowledge to discussions of content.

### *7.2.1.2 Sociological and cultural aspect of my practice*

After discussing the individual signs of criticality from my practice in the light of pedagogy for autonomy, I will next discuss five socio-cultural signs of criticality that I have selected from the previous section across the three phases of my practice (See Table 5) in the light of pedagogy for autonomy.

#### 7.2.1.2.1 Resisting difference or the supremacy of the dominant discourse

In my practice some students showed resistance to being in charge of their own learning, to making decisions, and to other aspects of both a pedagogy for autonomy and criticality. A pedagogy for autonomy was something new for most of my students who were used to the teacher making most the decisions in the classroom. In this sense, their resisting a pedagogy for autonomy meant resisting difference at times and instead choosing the dominant discourse for them. Resistance to being in charge is not a characteristic of a pedagogy for autonomy but it can be regarded as an expected reaction from students who are not used to it. One could argue that a pedagogy for autonomy was conducive to criticality if criticality is understood as engaging with what happens in the classroom and responding to it and personal ways, trying to understand, or resisting what they do not like. Others, however, might argue that resisting what they do not like might be a sign of lack of criticality, lack of engagement in trying to understand in what ways this new practice can be beneficial and why they resist it. All in all, a pedagogy for autonomy generated both contentment and resistance; both engagement and lack of engagement can be signs of criticality; above all, engaging in discussing and understanding these reactions constitutes criticality.

#### 7.2.1.2.2 Sceptical attitude to totalising discourse

Regarding this aspect of criticality, having a sceptical disposition towards discourse that is presented as the only truth, a pedagogy for autonomy does not stipulate that this disposition should be encouraged. Perhaps it is expected that teachers and learners would be accepting of different voices and condemn totalising discourse. This, however, is a key characteristic of a critical pedagogy.

#### 7.2.1.2.3 Presenting information about own society and culture as facts

Especially in Phases One and Two, students very often discussed how things are in their culture as if there was a homogenous and immutable truth. Of course, the discourse is very powerful and the struggle to perform differently is acknowledged by students in Phase Two. In a multicultural and global classroom like the three contexts in this study, working against stereotypes, towards accepting difference and opening up perspectives is a challenge and a component of a critical education for tolerance, diversity and equality and of a pedagogy for autonomy as documented in the latest book on autonomy by Little, Dam and Legenhausen (2017). A pedagogy for autonomy that ‘responds to challenges of differentiation and inclusion, supporting the social inclusion of adult refugees and the educational inclusion of immigrant children’ (ibid.: 2017) is conducive to criticality.

#### 7.2.1.2.4 Critiquing aspects of own culture and society and having thirst for change and improvement

This aspect of my practice in the light of criticality relates to the aspect explained above. In Phase One some students expressed their contentment with being able to choose what to work on based on their needs, which was a new educative experience for them. They felt they had a voice now. In Phase Two some students while comparing a pedagogy for autonomy with less participatory practices in their context, they expressed seeing that a change is needed in their context, that a more democratic and humanistic approach to teaching and learning would be necessary. Participation, action and justice are founding stones of both a pedagogy for autonomy and a critical pedagogy. Thus an autonomous classroom characterised by

participation and driven by a humanitarian spirit (Said, 2004), as Estela expressed in Phase Two, can be said to be conducive to criticality too.

#### 7.2.1.2.5 Exploring own epistemic questions about socio-cultural aspects of own and foreign contexts

Especially in Phase Two when students were given a broad topic to explore such as democracy or education, they developed specific questions about the new and their own socio-cultural contexts. In this programme, Phase Two, there was a session on the British Culture and Society in which I gave students space to think of questions about the British culture and society they were interested in exploring. Very often they explored questions arising from their new lived experiences in the UK; aspects they were curious about because they were different in their own socio-cultural context. An autonomous classroom provides students with space to explore questions that are relevant for them and to bring their own experiences and knowledge, their own voices, to the process of making meaning. In a multi-cultural classroom, questions about culture and society are expected as much as it is expected that students draw on their lived experience and knowledge and the discourses they know in the learning process and the construction of knowledge. Choosing what to learn, and constructing knowledge from one's previous knowledge and experience (Vygotsky, 1978) are features of a pedagogy for autonomy which have been conducive to criticality in my practice.

#### *7.2.1.3 Interpersonal aspect of my practice*

Having discussed the individual and socio-cultural signs of criticality across the three phases of my teaching practice in the light of pedagogy for autonomy, I will now discuss the five interpersonal signs of criticality that I have selected across the three phases (See Table 5) in the light of pedagogy for autonomy.

By looking at the signs of the interpersonal aspect of criticality in the three phases of my practice as shown in the last row of Table 5, five interrelated features of the interpersonal aspect of criticality have been identified in my practice which I will mention below in order to discuss them in relation to an autonomous classroom. These are: (1) dialogue for understanding in an atmosphere of joint enquiry; (2)

expressing, sharing, articulating and formalising one's voice, opinion, learning, thoughts, views and work with others; (3) bringing own experience and knowledge centre-stage and finding inspiration from each other's knowledge; (4) questioning privileged knowledge and incorporating marginalised knowledge; and (5) the societal nature of criticality, that is, criticality as a societal endeavour. All the criticality features mentioned above are there in a pedagogy for autonomy, in particular the first three which refer to students working together in the stages of planning, carrying out and evaluating their own classroom work. Sharing what they have achieved by the end of each class and what they need to do next is a defining feature of an autonomous classroom. Our using posters for this purpose is in line with an autonomous language classroom. The last two interpersonal aspects of criticality mentioned above bring the outside world to the classroom, that is, social issues concerning justice and equality. In other words, considering marginalised voices, questioning dominant discourses and working towards a common critical and autonomous education were signs of criticality in my practice which are also present in the autonomous classroom practices that Little, Dam and Legenhausen (2017) discuss in their latest publication. In this sense and in response to our current world issues a pedagogy for autonomy is conducive to criticality.

### **7.2.2 Criticality and Exploratory Practice**

In this section I will respond to the part of the second research question regarding the extent to which and in what ways Exploratory Practice can be conducive to criticality. In order to answer this question I will examine the signs of criticality, its individual, socio-cultural and interpersonal aspects in my practice (See Table 5) in the light of the EP principles which have been presented in Chapter Three (Allwright & Hanks, 2009: 260; Allwright, 2003b: 128-130). This examination will shed light into whether, and if so how, EP was conducive to criticality.

#### *7.2.2.1 The individual aspect of criticality*

Next, I will explore the following individual aspects of criticality: Self-awareness, metacognition and reflection; Enquiring one's own questions and developing the quality of one's curiosity; Personal engagement in learning – the everyday and

expert knowledge; Developing one's own voice – whose knowledge; Decision-making; and A disruptive pedagogy and performing difference, which have been fully developed in Section 7.1 and are summarised in Table 5, in the light of the EP principles (Allwright, 2003b: 128-130).

#### 7.2.2.1.1 Principle 1: Put 'quality of life' first

The first EP principle states that quality of life should be put first. Giving students space to enquire about their own epistemic questions allowed them to focus on issues that were affecting the students' quality of life. In Phase Two, for example, one of the students was not communicating well with her host family in the UK and asked me if she and her group could explore that issue as part of the syllabus session on the British Culture. Their question was: 'How to get along well with our British family members?' (See section 5.1.3). When this group shared their work with the rest of the class, everyone had something to say about their enquiry because it resonated to certain extent with all of them (See extract 43). In Phase Three Hector's quality of life in the classroom was negatively affected by his finding the essay topic that I suggested irrelevant to his discipline and the level of English too high for him (See extract 104). This is an example of the different factors that affect a student's quality of life and criticality development in the classroom. At the time I thought that working first on a generic essay topic all together could have benefits too and Hector's case posed a dilemma to me that I should have discussed with him more lengthily until we could find a way forward. Instead, little by little he stopped engaging.

Quality of life also refers to fostering affection, positive relationships in the classroom. Grey (2009) argues that positive relationships in the classroom can be conducive to being more accepting of difference and thus more tolerant and open to different world views and ways of being. This constitutes both criticality and quality of life. My students have expressed contentment with the positive learning atmosphere, accepting of uncertainty, different views, and the limits of knowledge. One example in which hostile relationships affect the quality of life in the classroom in Phase One is when I asked Ariel to talk about his drawing which was hanging on the wall and none of his classmates showed interest in listening to him.

Quality of life is also enhanced for students by having opportunities to reflect on the learning experience and express their feelings about it. Drawing as a reflective tool proved very effective in allowing students to share their own experiences. If we are not prepared to listen to each other then the quality of life in the classroom is affected too. This was the case with Charly's drawing (Drawing 10) in Phase One. Subconsciously I did not engage in discussing it more deeply to understand what he really meant. However, he could express his feelings, show his drawing and talk about it in response to everyone's questions, which did enhance the quality of everyone's life in the classroom. In Phase Three many students expressed positive feelings about the drawing session; in other words, their quality of life in the classroom was enhanced by having opportunities to express their reflections on their learning via drawing, and show them to others and talk about them (See section 6.2.2). Students' reflections on their own learning enhanced their self-awareness which in turn bettered the classroom quality of life. In Phase One, Alice's reflective drawings show her becoming aware that she is a hard-working and good student (See drawings 4 and 5).

The quality of life in the classroom was also enhanced in my practice by students' personal engagement in the learning process, by becoming aware that developing their own voice matters, and by making decisions about their own language learning. In other words, students' engagement with their everyday knowledge (Chun, 2015) in meaning-making; their noticing that developing their own voice in their essays really matters; and their having a say in what to work on based on their individual language needs contributed to an improved quality of life and value of the educative enterprise.

#### 7.2.2.1.2 Principle 2: Work primarily to understand language classroom life

The second EP principle focuses on 'working primarily to understand language classroom life' (Allwright, 2003b: 128-130). Allwright and Hanks (2009) suggest formulating puzzles in the form of why-questions as a means of working for understanding. In my practice why-questions arose naturally as my students were enquiring their epistemic questions. However, if they formulated how- or what-questions I did not ask them to turn them into why-questions. The reason for this was

that my focus was on understanding and developing criticality and I did not want to restrict my students to asking why-questions only in case what- and how-questions would involve criticality and lead to gaining deep understanding too. Also having conducted EP before (Salvi, 2017) I felt that it could be monotonous to always ask my students to formulate their enquiries in the form of why-questions.

Looking at my classroom practice, in Phase One, students asked why-questions to each other naturally to understand each other's drawing. Regarding Alice's drawing (Drawing 4), Benet asked her, 'Why did you draw a bee?'. When discussing Charly's drawing (Drawing 9) I asked him, 'Why did you want to draw a fist in the first place?'. Ariel's drawing (Drawing 6) forefronts a why-question, 'Why are you so serious?'. And Alice asked Benjamin, 'Why did you draw a tree?' (See Drawing 14). Perhaps what can be said at this stage is that using drawings has been conducive to developing understanding of language classroom life and criticality understood as individual and joint enquiry and dialogue (Brown, 1998). As I have expressed earlier in this study drawings could have been exploited to developing much deeper understanding if it had not been for my concerns or mixed feelings regarding using too much time on an innovation that constituted a disruptive practice. In the interviews I conducted I asked students how they felt about reflecting on their learning. One of them said, 'By talking about something we don't understand we will get answers to our questions'; and another student said, 'In order to solve problems we need to see them first'. These responses imply working for understanding despite not referring to exploring reasons why something happens or is the way it is.

In Phase Two, in my diary, I expressed contentment that my students raised why-questions despite my not asking them to focus on turning their inquiries into why-questions (Section 5.1.2). This shows that while acknowledging the value of working towards understanding a problematic situation before jumping to finding solutions (Allwright and Hanks, 2009; Hanks, 2017a), I did not want to restrict the students' enquiries to why-questions only. By looking at the data presented in the description of my practice in the second phase, the questions the students enquired were all what-, how- and should- questions (Section 5.1.2-3). Extract 43 is a transcription of a group of students sharing issues arising from living in a host family. By raising what- and should- questions, they seem to focus on finding solutions to problems.

Embedded in their presentation were these questions: ‘What should we talk about with our British host families?, What topics should we avoid talking about?, and Should we share things with them? Two further problems they posed were: ‘My host family told me that if I wanted (to do) something, they would ask only once’ and ‘I stayed alone in my bedroom all afternoon’.

Perhaps, as is suggested within EP, suggesting that students turn these problems into why questions would transform the discussion of solutions into enquiring into understanding why their host families might have said that or acted in such a way and why they feel the way they do. For example, by turning the statement, ‘My host family told me that if I wanted (to do) something, they would ask me only once’ into a why-question, ‘Why would my host family ask me things only once?, the following reasons might have been discussed: Do they say that because they are angry at me? Is it because they usually say things once and want to ensure I adapt to their way of being? Is it because they are not prepared to learn from or are unaware of other ways of being and doing things? As stated within EP, exploring why-questions seems to contribute to developing understanding of the problems the students pose before jumping to finding solutions or advice on how to respond to those problems. Perhaps focusing on understanding a problematic situation first is more in line with developing criticality understood as a sceptical attitude towards totalising discourse and clichés (Freire, 2011).

McPeck (1981:19) says that in order for a person to be critical they must not only show reflective scepticism but also have expert knowledge. In this sense, if students try to understand their own puzzles by resorting to their own common-sense knowledge and personal experience only, they are not being entirely critical. What McPeck (ibid.) suggests is that critical thinkers should engage with expert knowledge and sources with reflective scepticism. His words resonate with EP’s focus on understanding rather than on jumping to finding solutions to situations that might need deeper understanding first. In other words, developing reflective scepticism about what we hear and read resonates more with EP’s focus on understanding than with jumping to finding solutions.

Having said this, the fact that the literature on criticality does not focus on the nature and types of enquiry, or on distinguishing between enquiring into the nature of a problem and enquiring into solutions to a problem, suggests that criticality can be

deployed when enquiring into either the nature of problems or solutions to problems. McPeck (ibid.) argues that critical thinking involves having a reflective scepticism and disciplinary knowledge. Perhaps in the literature on criticality it is implied that the nature of a problem will be understood first before thinking of solutions to that problem. By deploying a reflectively sceptical attitude to both their common-sense knowledge and specialist sources it is expected that students are being critical and understanding the subject matter deeply. In the example of the students' issues with their host families, they do not seem to be deploying a reflectively sceptical attitude to what each classmate say or to what the host family said. Perhaps if the focus was on deploying a reflective scepticism the students would have naturally questioned the problems first.

In this example the students were not engaging with specialist knowledge, they were engaging with their common-sense knowledge, sharing their issues to find comfort. In this process they realised that most students had similar issues, which was in itself a discovery and a relief, and understood that being and communicating with others in a different society is challenging and generates suffering. In other words, by talking about their issues they developed understanding. It is true that these students also focused on finding solutions which might have prevented them from developing deeper understanding of the nature of their problems. But they did work for understanding, and a certain level of understanding was gained.

Perhaps, in the light of McPeck (ibid.), if these students had engaged with literature on host family issues arising when living abroad, and have formalised their knowledge in the form of an essay there would have been clearer space for them to show reflective scepticism, deeper understanding and critical thinking.

This EP focus on understanding resonates with Koczanowicz's (2008, 2014, 2017) definition of social democracy as dialogue for understanding. He distinguishes understanding from agreement which shows his focus on accepting difference. In Phase Two, for example, there is a plethora of examples of students highlighting having opportunities to speak up, to share their own ideas, to think, to have 'free discussions' and research (See extracts 49, 54, 61 and 62). Again even though students do not use the word 'understanding', it is clear that through having opportunities to discuss their questions 'freely', talk about their issues, investigate what they are interested in and sharing their insights with the rest of the class,

everyone involved has developed some understanding of the topics explored, themselves, the others, their previous knowledge, new knowledge, and the new environment, to mention some examples.

All in all, allowing students to engage with their own knowledge and experience in the enquiry of issues of their own interest has been a highlight according to my students. Focusing on why-questions can contribute to understanding the nature of problematic situations before thinking of solving problems; and formalising one's insights in the form of an essay for example can also contribute to exercising critical thinking understood as a reflectively sceptical attitude to knowledge. These three pedagogic features can contribute to developing understanding of language classroom life as stated in the second EP principle.

#### *7.2.2.2 The socio-cultural aspect of criticality*

One socio-cultural aspect of criticality in my practice that resonates with EP, more specifically with one of its propositions which is concerned with trust, is having a sceptical attitude to totalising discourse. In Phase One, Alfie talked to me outside of the class about stereotypes of Chinese people abroad. Trust was at the heart of this dialogue. He opened up and dared to share his concern and curiosity and to question a stereotype or information he had heard again and again. In order to discuss this there should be trust that the dialogue will be non-judgemental and that respect and a commitment to understanding will prevail. In this sense, trust, which underlies EP, was conducive to this aspect of criticality.

It could also be argued that the socio-cultural aspect of criticality which involves, among others, becoming aware of the struggle of performing difference, and noticing and trying to understand different socio-cultural practices, resonates with EP Principles 1 and 2, which are concerned with the 'what' of EP, that is, with working for understanding and prioritising quality of life. For example, in Phase Two, while enquiring into the role of the Chinese and the British family, a group of students acknowledged the struggle of performing differently from what was socially expected (Benesch, 2009; Grey, 2009). Their awareness results from inquiring into their own epistemic doubts in groups, and is certainly a life issue. Thus EP principles 1 and 2 were conducive to developing this socio-cultural aspect of criticality as well.

However, there is one feature of the socio-cultural aspect of criticality, namely, resisting those aspects of a different or of one's own socio-cultural practices that cause social suffering (Herzog, 2016) or are unjust (Benesch, 2001; Chun, 2009), which is more reactionary and thus seems to be less linked with EP. For example, in Phase Two, Estela's group discussed aspects of the education system in China that they would like to change and introduced their imaginary university (Extract 53). In other words, they identified problems and suggested solutions. This is at odds with EP's focus on working for understanding first, before thinking of solving problems. As I have suggested earlier, perhaps allowing students to identify problems, find solutions and think of imaginary alternatives could be complemented with asking them to focus on why-questions to enquire into the nature of the problem too. After all, imaginary thinking constitutes criticality as it creates hope that it is possible to have a better, more just, tolerant and loving existence (Dewey, 1916; Freire, 2011; Benesch, 2009; Giroux, 2011; McDougall et al., 2012; Breault and Breault, 2013). Related to solving problems is the concept of working for improvement, which EP challenges. Instead, EP proposes working for understanding. In Phase One, Benjamin and Benet expressed their wishes for improvement in their language competence via drawings (Drawings 13-16). In itself there is nothing wrong with being willing to learn and become more proficient in the language. EP proposes a non-instrumental education, for understanding (Allwright, 2001) rather than for change or improvement.

Perhaps an important point to consider in this discussion is the relationship between EP's focus primarily on understanding the language classroom life, and the emphasis of some critical traditions on political action (Fairclough, 2017), social change, equality and social justice.

When EP distinguishes focusing on understanding the nature of problems from thinking of change, improvement and solutions, it is primarily referring to language classroom life. Within CEAP for example, noticing that the psychology syllabus was gender-biased, Benesch (2001) acted for change, and justice, by introducing feminist literature and by providing students with space to make meaning of the literature in class discussions. Benesch's action for change was also regarding classroom life. In my practice, in Phase Two, Deborah acted for understanding and change by choosing

to discuss a host family issue and to think of solutions to it with a group of classmates.

Allwright (2001) argues that Action Research involves action for change and that Reflective Practice is concerned with thinking for understanding, while EP is action for understanding. Advocates of EP have insisted on differentiating the purpose of Exploratory Practice from that of Action Research, arguing that while the former focuses on understanding, the latter aims at change and problem-solving. In response, advocates of AR have said that they too work for understanding, as well as for change. Regarding my practice, as I have expressed earlier in this section, I think that my students too developed understanding of the issues they inquired into even if they were orientated towards solving problems. Having said this, as EP suggests, exploring into the nature of the problem under investigation also leads to understanding them before thinking of solving them. Both kinds of enquiry seem to conduce to criticality.

### *7.2.2.3 The interpersonal aspect of criticality*

The interpersonal aspect of criticality is concerned with dialogic and joint enquiry (Brown, 1998; Freire, 2011; Benesch, 2001; Chun, 2015) in order to ultimately get to know oneself and others better (Tubbs, 2004) and is thus closely linked with EP principles 3, 4 and 5 which are all concerned with who is involved in working for understanding the language classroom life.

#### 7.2.2.3.1 Principle 3: Involve everybody; Principle 4: Work to bring people together; Principle 5: Work also for mutual understanding

These three EP principles informed my practice substantially and were conducive to criticality development. Along the three phases, students highlight working together, learning from each other, getting inspired from each other, sharing their research with each other as highlights of the experience. I will now mention some examples from the three phases to illustrate these three principles. Principle 3, ‘involving everyone as practitioners developing their own understanding’ (Allwright & Hanks, 2009: 260), was realised in my practice every time students enquired their own questions and doubts about syllabus content based on their own needs. They worked

in groups and shared their own understanding with each other. In Phase Two Julian enquired into British politeness (Extract 55) while other classmates enquired into other aspects of the British culture. Everyone was involved in developing their own understanding of issues of their own interest. This is in line with criticality development. Brown (1998) argues that critical thinking is concerned with students enquiring their own epistemic questions in an environment of joint inquiry. Another classroom activity that involved everyone for individual understanding was drawing; everyone was involved in expressing what they had learned via drawing individually. Principle 4, 'work to bring people together in a common enterprise' (Allwright & Hanks, 2009: 260), was realised for example by encouraging students to work in groups and to share their group discussions with others as Sabrina expressed in her written reflection on the second week (Extract 79). Also the session when students looked at each other's drawings and asked each other questions about them was another example of working to bring people together. This is in line with Brown's (1998) argument that critical thinking is a societal endeavour, a common enterprise; with CEAP which is concerned with giving students opportunities to engage their own experiences in the process of making meaning of syllabus content all together (Benesch, 2001; Chun, 2015); and with critical theory, which is concerned with diversity, tolerance of difference and equality. Principle 5, 'work also for mutual understanding', resonates with Koczanowicz's (2008, 2014, 2017) concept of social democracy as dialogue for understanding rather than for agreement, and with my Phase One students' understanding of criticality as listening to a multitude of voices and learning from each other despite not agreeing with each other. Interestingly, one of the students said that you can 'give up the part you don't agree with' (Extract 28) which raises the question of whether participants have worked for mutual understanding especially of views they disagree with or whether they have ignored aspects of the conversation they disagree with. In Phase Three, John highlights working for mutual understanding as the main gain from the experience by saying that the big difference with other modules he has taken is that here 'we need to hear ideas after we research' (Extract 80). In other words, they do not keep their enquiries to themselves but they talk about and share them with classmates. Mutual understanding is also referred to in Freire's (2011) work when he discusses the importance of 'the other' in helping us test the truth or strength of our beliefs, opinions and decisions through dialogue. As Charly said in Phase One, being critical

is to ask questions to the speaker so that their speech becomes clearer, more precise and deeper. In doing so both parties understand themselves and each other better, and thus work for mutual understanding.

#### 7.2.2.3.2 Principle 6: Make the work a continuous enterprise; Principle 7: Integrate the work for understanding into classroom practice

Since the EP principles 6 and 7 respond to ‘how’ the work for understanding is done, that is continuously and integrating it into normal pedagogic practice, they permeate the three aspects of criticality: the individual aspect that focuses on being in charge of one’s own learning and enquiring into one’s own questions; the sociological and cultural aspect, which stresses developing socio-cultural awareness and questioning and enquiring into social practices; and the interpersonal aspect, which is concerned with togetherness, dialogic enquiry, articulating and making meaning with others. The question I will be responding to here is whether and if so how these two EP principles informed my practice and were conducive to criticality.

Principle 6, ‘make the work a continuous enterprise’, refers to its sustainability and to not limiting students’ enquiries to a one-off opportunity. It involves continually providing students with space and time to enquire their own questions in an atmosphere of joint enquiry (Brown, 1998). In my practice I did this by providing students with a classroom structure which consisted of showing them one or more syllabus items and asking them to explore the chosen item or a question related to that item, understand it, talk about it, ask question and learn from each other. Also reflecting on their own learning, both via writing and drawing, was a continuous enterprise aimed at helping students become aware of what they were doing, how they had felt and what they were going to do next. This continuous and sustainable way of working towards criticality enhanced criticality. As Grey (2009) argues, it is in the repetitive performance of difference that one’s subjectivity is asserted. In other words, performing criticality repetitively helps the subject asserts its critical subjectivity. The more opportunities the students have to develop criticality, to perform a critical attitude and construct a critical practice all together the more their critical subjectivities are asserted.

Principle 7, ‘minimise the burden by integrating the work for understanding into normal pedagogic practice’, informed my practice and was conducive to criticality. Next I will explain how. As I said with regard to principle 6, promoting individual and joint enquiry and dialogue was integrated into the tasks and the content the students had to do as part of the language programme. In Phase One, for example, despite having to follow a topic-based syllabus, students were encouraged to make meaning of it by relating it to their own realities, by incorporating current newspaper articles, and through drawing too. Benjamin’s drawing (Drawing 7) for example, is an expression of his learning on the second week which was devoted to the syllabus topic, ‘IT and Social Media’. In his drawing he expressed what he perceived as a social trend in his society: young people spending more time in the virtual world of the Internet than socialising in the real world. As has been discussed in previous chapters, even though this drawing could have been exploited more to develop deeper understandings and critical thinking, Benjamin expressed his understanding pictorially and talked about it and shared his learning with his classmates. Making meaning of content in personal ways, reflecting on social practices, and sharing one’s understanding and reflections in dialogue with others, are all signs of criticality. In Phases Two and Three the ‘work for understanding’ was integrated into normal pedagogic practice by providing students with one or more syllabus content items for them to explore, understand, talk about and share with everyone in the classroom.

### **7.2.3 Criticality and Arts-enriched Methods**

This section will discuss to what extent and how arts-enriched research methods (HEA, 2014) contributed to developing criticality. Specifically, the three aspects of criticality, the individual, socio-cultural and interpersonal, that emerged in the data will be discussed next.

Arts-enriched methods have contributed to criticality. By arts-enriched methods I am referring to the drawings the students have created as reflective tool. They reflected on their learning experience visually and talked about their drawings; both in the act of creating their work and when talking about them, they developed their criticality, the individual, socio-cultural and interpersonal aspects of criticality.

### *7.2.3.1 The individual aspects of criticality*

The individual aspect of criticality refers to being in charge, enquiring one's own questions, self-realisation and awareness, developing one's own voice, and turning one's ingenious curiosity into a more critical curiosity.

Regarding the individual aspect of criticality, students developed their self-assertion and self-awareness (Freire, 2011; Brown, 1998; Tubbs, 2004); by being in charge of the reflective process and creative act, some students asked why-questions in their drawings and in so doing introduced their personal enquiries. The session where students talked about their drawings was an opportunity for them to explore the questions they posed more deeply and to develop the quality of their curiosity, from an ingenious to a more critical one (Freire, 2011). However, as it has already been pointed out, the criticality potential of their drawings could not always be exploited fully.

Arts-enriched research methods have allowed the students and me to capture the students' perceptions on the experience more directly and clearly (Knowles and Cole, 2008). For example, in her drawing (Drawing 2), Barbara expressed her transformation, from not liking taking lessons to feeling good in the English language class. Her drawing depicts liberation, self-awareness, a realisation that being in charge and active in the learning process makes her feel good. Similarly, in Drawing 5, Alice shows her realisation that 'actually she is a good learner'. Since developing growing self-awareness is a form of criticality, it can be argued that arts-enriched methods have contributed to developing this aspect of criticality.

Mary's drawing in Phase Two (Drawing 18) vividly, directly and without judgement shows her understanding of her way of working in the classroom in China and in the UK. What is powerful about this drawing from my point of view is its potential for an array of interpretations: for example, it could be interpreted as social critique. The sharp contrast between the sitting arrangements in these two contexts can have a powerful effect on the viewer. Above all, it is a visual expression and representation of her understanding of the British and Chinese education systems which were discussed in class. In this sense she made meaning of the classroom content visually. Thus it can be said that arts-enriched methods by allowing her to make meaning in

personal ways from her knowledge and experience, contributed to developing the individual aspect of her criticality.

Charly's drawing (Drawing 8) portrays the image of a chicken and the inscription, 'are you happy'. When he talked about this drawing he said that he intended to write 'you are happy'. Whether in the form of a question or not, these words opened up the discussion and posed an enquiry into feelings, happiness. Enquiring into one's own epistemic doubts is critical thinking (Brown, 1998; Tubbs, 2004) and thus drawing allowed Charly to develop criticality.

However, enquiring into feeling happy could be one interpretation of this drawing. Sontag (1967:14) argues that 'the function of [art] criticism should be to show how [the work of art] is what it is [...] rather than to show what it means'. Applying Sontag's words to Charly's drawing, it can be argued that it can have as many meanings as there are viewers. If I try 'to show how it is what it is', I could probably say that it is chicken with a big oval head, two eyes and a beak, a smaller body, two arms and two feet. On the upper left side of the drawing the words 'are', 'you', 'happy' are listed one below the other. The red colour was used for the words and the contour of the chicken, on a white surface. By discussing Charly's drawing following Sontag's advice, 'the work of art becomes more real' (ibid.). Restraining oneself from interpreting each other's drawings resonates with having a cautious and sceptical attitude to making generalisations (McPeck 1981; Brown, 1998; Freire, 2011) which is a defining feature of criticality, and with EP's principle 2 that focuses on understanding first. On the other hand, making meaning from one's own knowledge and experience is also at the heart of criticality (Chun, 2015; Benesch, 2001). After all, this was not art criticism. This is an experience of students drawing to express aspects of their learning experience, sharing their reflections through dialogue. Having said this, when it comes to me, the researcher discussing whether this contributed to criticality development, interpretation is hard to escape and Sontag's words are worth mentioning.

### *7.2.3.2 The socio-cultural aspect of criticality*

The socio-cultural aspect of criticality involves social critique, considerations of ideology and power, social justice and equality, and performing 'difference' (Grey,

2009). In this sense drawing was a powerful tool for my students to express their cultural and social concerns, resistance to aspects of the current educative practice that seemed to have been perceived as a threat, and a statement that sharing their enquiries with others is important in education.

I will now illustrate how drawing was conducive to the socio-cultural aspect of criticality. Benjamin's drawing (Drawing 7) of a kid at a computer desk playing video-games seems to be an expression of his dissatisfaction with this social trend. When talking about his drawing, he said, with an expression of concern in his face, that he thought this was true in China. The drawing can endlessly function as a provocation and prompt to enquire into this trend more deeply and in this sense the learners can develop their criticality, in this case, related to society and culture. Charly's drawing (Drawing 10) of a bat attacking the Chinese students throwing arrows from above shows his perception of the new lecturer perhaps being direct and asking them to be in charge and make decisions, which was alien to them. In this sense drawing was therapeutic allowing him to express that 'which one would perhaps neglect otherwise' (Bagnoli, 2009: 565). Unfortunately, as I have mentioned in Chapter Four, subconsciously feeling threatened and criticised by his drawing, I did not provide space and time to exploit its powerful potential to generate further mutual understanding and criticality development. I have categorised it as an example of student socio-cultural criticality because it is an expression of his understanding of the clash of cultures regarding what is good language teaching and learning practice. Finally, John's drawing (Drawing 22), which is a clear expression of the interpersonal aspect of criticality, that is, dialogic enquiry in an atmosphere of joint enquiry (Brown, 1998), can also be characterised as a social statement of what he values in education: sharing their enquiries and research. In this sense his drawing shows socio-cultural criticality too.

### *7.2.3.3 The interpersonal aspect of criticality*

Regarding the interpersonal aspect of criticality, their works of art have allowed students to learn about each other's voices and experiences, while the individual interviews for example gave them the opportunity to express themselves without necessarily having to share all their reflections with their classmates. Learning about

oneself and the other is a crucial element within conceptualisations of criticality. In other words, developing critical thinking is developing growing self-awareness and awareness of the other (Brown, 1998; Tubbs, 2004). Interacting with others is an opportunity to articulate one's own voice. It is when articulating one's thoughts and ideas that they become clearer to ourselves and to the others, and that one becomes more aware of oneself and the other (Freire, 2011). The drawings served as a prompt to converse about each other's ideas and learning experience.

Generating a space for students to ask each other questions about their drawings, enquiring into the reasons why they drew what they drew and sharing their own interpretations is an example of dialogic enquiry, which constitutes critical thinking (Tubbs, 2004, Brown 1998). Drawing and talking about their drawings happened in 'an atmosphere of joint enquiry' (Brown, 1998) and was intended to generate individual and mutual understanding. One example of dialogic enquiry and working for mutual understanding is the dialogue I had with Ian (Extract 99) about his drawing (Drawing 27), 'the growing tree' in which he explained that the sequence of growing trees represented him and his becoming a more matured, prepared and self-aware language learner. From the point of view of the content of the dialogue this could also be an example of the individual aspect of his growing criticality. Judging by the dialogue itself, it is an example of the interpersonal aspect of criticality.

All in all, in response to the question of how an arts-enriched research method can contribute to criticality development, the analysis of the students' drawings including what the students said about them has revealed the students' voices more clearly and directly (Knowles and Cole, 2008). It has allowed them to express perhaps what they would not have expressed otherwise (Bagnoli, 2009). Their drawings have captured thoughts, reflections, critiques, and feelings that could be hard to express verbally (Knowles and Cole, 2008). Even if they are expressed verbally, the researcher inadvertently could have skipped them within the bulk of words. However, the drawings speak by themselves.

Also the act of making a drawing involves reflecting about what matters to participants. It engages all their senses and encourages them to think by themselves and reflect about their language needs and their learning experience. As it has been seen in the case of Charly, making a painting was an opportunity to express his dissatisfaction, his fear, his values and his love for his culture and customs. For him,

that was more important at the time than reflecting on his language needs, and arts-enriched methods made this possible. Asking questions about each other's drawings was a way of 'making meaning' (Chun, 2015) and understanding each other more deeply.

Drawing has allowed participants to express themselves in a non-verbal form. As an innovative addition to the language classroom experience, it was disruptive. It created confusion, happiness; it was an unexpected innovation. In this sense, these methods are critical. They are critical because they challenge the status quo, the normalised and expected way of teaching, learning and researching. They are critical because they give a voice to the main actors in the learning experience, the students, whose voices are usually neglected.

Doing reflective drawings has enabled my students to celebrate their realisation that learning is fun and interesting when their voices and choices are taken into account; to critique the present practice perceived as an imposition, or the teacher-centred practices they have experienced in the past. By drawing and painting, learners are in charge of what they want to show and express. It is therapeutic allowing for critique and justice, and constitutes a critical practice (Knowles and Cole, 2008). Using art can be considered a tool to enable learners to be autonomous, and express themselves. However, at first this was a task suggested by the lecturer rather than chosen by the students. In this sense it is a tool for reflection on practice similar to a reflective log but with the extra advantage that appeals to different sensitivities and allows for critique and justice in a different way.

The next and final chapter includes a 8.1 Summary of the study, 8.2 Contributions of the study, the 8.3 Reflexive learning as a lecturer and as a researcher, and 8.4 Directions and issues for further research.

## Chapter Eight: Conclusion

*The last act is bloody, however brave be all the rest of the play; at the end they throw a little earth upon your head, and it's all over forever.* (Dillard, 1985: 264)

### 8.1 Summary

As part of this study I set out to investigate criticality, what it means and whether it manifests in my teaching English for Academic Purposes in three university programmes. Prior to starting this doctoral research, my teaching practice had been informed by a Pedagogy for Autonomy and Exploratory Practice, whose integration I explored as part of an MA programme I did in 2010-2012. Noticing that these two practices seemed to be conducive to criticality or what I understood criticality to be at the time, I decided to focus this doctoral research on exploring criticality by deploying a Pedagogy for Autonomy and Exploratory Practice in my teaching EAP in three consecutive programmes that I call phases/ cycles in here. Also noticing that posters, a form of artistic expression, were consistently and meaningfully used as pedagogic tools in a Pedagogy for Autonomy and EP and that more research into using posters as research tools was needed, I decided to deploy Arts-enriched Research Methods to explore criticality.

The two research questions this study has responded to are 1) what signs of criticality there are in what my students and I did in the classroom, and 2) to what extent and how a Pedagogy for Autonomy, Exploratory Practice and Arts-enriched Research Methods were conducive to my own and my students' criticality development. The data I collected includes my own lecturer-researcher diary, the students' reflective learning writing and their reflections via drawings, some of the students' posters of work done in class, transcriptions of semi-structured interviews in the first cycle, of students' oral presentations of their enquiries, and of some group discussions. First I analysed this data thematically (Mann, 2016; Richards, 2003) to capture the themes that emerged naturally trying not to impose any meaning of criticality. This analysis was presented in chapters 4-6 so that the reader has a clear sense of what happened in the classroom and what themes emerged prior to

identifying signs of criticality. In the first section of chapter 7 the themes that had emerged from the three teaching experiences were organised into three overarching themes to make the discussion of the themes in the light of criticality more manageable. The three overarching themes, Being in Charge; Sociological and Cultural Awareness; and Interacting with Others, were discussed in the light of criticality as explored in the Literature Review, in particular these four currents of thought: Critical English for Academic Purposes, Critical Pedagogy, Critical Thinking and Critical Theory.

The signs of criticality related to Being in Charge in what my students and I did were: my students' enquiries of their own epistemic needs (Critical Thinking); a growing self-awareness and assertion (Philosophical Critical Tradition, Critical Thinking and Critical Pedagogy); making decisions about their own learning (Critical Pedagogy); developing their own voices in their writing (CEAP); engaging in meaning making in personal ways from their own experiences and knowledge (CEAP); transforming their initial ingenious curiosity into a more critical curiosity (Critical Pedagogy); becoming more certain with evidence about their enquiries (Critical Pedagogy); and developing a sceptical attitude about things that appear commonsensical (Critical Pedagogy, Critical Thinking). The signs of criticality related to Sociological and Cultural Awareness in our educative experience were: developing a sceptical attitude to totalising discourse, to generalisations and to stereotypes (Critical Pedagogy, Critical Thinking); exploring their own epistemic questions about aspects of both their own and the foreign society and culture; developing their imaginative thinking and hope for a better and more just world (CEAP, Critical Pedagogy); critiquing unjust social practices (Critical Theory); and acknowledging the struggle of performing 'difference' (Critical Theory). Many times information about social practices was presented as facts, and not always was there class time to promote a sceptical attitude to that information and encourage students to enquire into the truthfulness of such information. Moreover, there is data showing my students' understanding of the new educational practice which again could have been better exploited to generate mutual understanding, development and criticality. Finally, the signs of criticality related to Interacting with Others in our educative experience were: dialogue in an atmosphere of joint enquiry (Critical Thinking); dialogue in search of understanding rather than agreement (Koczanowicz, 2017);

developing tolerance of and an open attitude to diverse and differing views (Critical Thinking, Critical Theory); including marginalised views and questioning dominant and privileged views (Critical Pedagogy, CEAP); and sharing their personal experiences and knowledge in the process of making meaning, learning from each other's understanding and inspiring each other (CEAP, Critical Pedagogy).

After finding signs of criticality in what my students and I did in each language programme, I explored to what extent and how a Pedagogy for Autonomy, Exploratory Practice and Arts-enriched Methods contributed to developing criticality. I found that as I had suspected the three approaches were conducive to criticality and more importantly that aspects of these practices that had posed questions to me became clearer when enquired in the light of criticality.

Pedagogy for Autonomy has contributed to developing criticality, and criticality has contributed to understanding aspects of pedagogy for autonomy more comprehensibly. By allowing learners to take centre stage in the educative enterprise by choosing what to work on, working in groups, sharing their work with everyone, and reflecting on their learning, pedagogy for autonomy contributed to those aspects of criticality which are: personal and joint enquiry, dialogue for understanding, and tolerance. In multicultural learning environments, understanding the other, developing an open attitude to diversity, and using this as the basis for student enquiries are characteristics of current autonomous educative practices (Little, Dam & Legenhausen, 2017). In my teaching practice, these characteristics constituted at the same time signs of criticality.

Exploratory Practice has contributed to criticality development in this way: its Principle 1, prioritise quality of life, has contributed to ensuring that students explore their own epistemic needs, which is constitutive of criticality; Principle 3-5, involve everyone, has contributed to dialogue, which constitutes critical thinking; Principles 6, make the work a continuous enterprise, and Principle 7, integrate the work into normal pedagogic practice, both equally apply to working towards developing criticality; in other words, the more sustainable and integrated into normal pedagogic practice criticality development is the more effective it will be. Finally, Principle 2, work for understanding before thinking of solving problems, has significantly contributed to better understanding criticality and this EP principle. EP's emphasis on differentiating understanding from solving problems proved useful when I

analysed some of my students' presentations of their enquiries. As has been shown, some of the student enquiries did not include enquiring into the reasons why things were that way, and other student enquiries were aimed at finding solutions. In those particular cases, making understanding the aim of the enquiry as EP Principle 2 suggests would have been helpful. Having said this, working towards solving problems should not prevent criticality either if this is done with a reflective and sceptical attitude towards totalising discourse (Freire, 2011; McPeck, 1981). Critical Pedagogy emphasises educating to empower citizens for social change to better their society, for social justice and equality. This seems to be in contrast with EP which is defined as 'action for understanding' (Allwright, 2001). EP claims that after practitioners understand their 'puzzles' they might feel like working towards change or not. But EP is primarily interested in working for understanding. Having said this, Brown (1998) defines Critical Thinking as personal enquiry and dialogue, which contributes to a more literate society whose members strive to understand and respect each other. This definition of criticality is more in line with EP's aim for understanding, and with Koczanowicz's (2017) concept of social democracy as dialogue aimed at understanding rather than at agreement. Thus within the different approaches to criticality, some focus more on understanding first, while others focus more on acting for social change and justice.

Drawing proved to be an effective research tool both for the students and me. Drawing allowed students to express themselves, their feelings, thoughts, and views; and to reflect on their learning. As products or finalised works of art they all posed questions inviting everyone to set on an enquiry into understanding them better through dialogue. Their power to develop criticality is more significant than I had expected. I realised that enquiries can start from the students' paintings, which is in line with EP which proposes using pedagogic activities as research tools. They have also proved effective as critique or to question and provoke. All in all, arts-enriched methods have proved powerful tools to develop criticality, autonomy and understanding, in relation to the three domains that emerged in my teaching practice: being in charge, developing socio-cultural awareness and interacting with others.

## 8.2 Contributions

This study has contributed to understanding of criticality and how to develop it in an EAP context; and of aspects of pedagogy for autonomy, EP and arts-enriched methods. It also shows that criticality understood more broadly from contributions from CEAP, critical pedagogy, critical thinking and critical theory can contribute to developing more timely critical EAP practices; and that pedagogy for autonomy, EP and arts-enriched research methods can contribute to criticality development. Finally, this study shows that practitioner research can bring about insights that can illuminate other practitioners and the field more broadly.

## 8.3 Reflexive learning as a lecturer and as a researcher

Researching my own teaching practice has been a significant learning experience. It has had both advantages and disadvantages. On the one hand, doing research was a way of forcing myself to look at aspects of my practice more closely and systemically. On the other hand, sometimes I felt it was an extra burden. But one should bear in mind that a practitioner research project does not need to be a long-term four-year project like this one. Since this practitioner research project was part of a doctoral study, it had to follow the rules and regulations of a doctoral project. Having said this, most of my work as a researcher consisted of making sure that I kept photographic, video, voice or written records of what we were doing in the classroom. This is an extra task that requires focus and attention of the teacher. At the same time, this made me feel more responsible, in control of and aware of what I was doing.

Since I did not want to impose an extra burden on my students I focused on pedagogy, teaching and learning, while collecting data and promoting criticality. On top of promoting criticality, I was at the same time reading the literature on criticality and attending conferences on this topic, which influenced my ideas about how to promote criticality in the classroom. Apart from this, I suspected that by deploying pedagogy for autonomy and by having my practice informed by the principles of exploratory practice, I was already promoting criticality which I would effectively analyse after the teaching had finished.

Since each of the teaching cycles happened one after the other and since I was reading the literature on criticality while teaching, I felt I did not have time to analyse the data. Somehow I felt that the teaching and learning was to a certain extent disconnected from the research I was doing and that is why I could delay the data analysis. This made me slightly anxious about not advancing my knowledge of criticality in my practice. This is perhaps the disadvantage of not having made my puzzle part of the teaching and learning. However, what stopped me from involving my students in understanding criticality with me in the classroom was a suspicion that criticality was a complex, theoretical and abstract concept. Of course, we were involved in and developing critical attitudes and actions in what we were doing. But my project involved discussing this theoretical concept and giving a name to what we were doing. I thought that such a task might not be indispensable for my students, given the short length of the programmes.

Reflecting back on the teaching and research experience, I think that I could have integrated my research into my practice by involving the students in it more directly, analysing smaller bits of data and sharing our partial understandings. This is a possibility for future research.

#### 8.4 Directions and issues for further research

Regarding Exploratory Practice, one direction for further research would be to involve learners in the lecturer-researcher's puzzle more directly, that is, in the whole process of understanding this concept by analysing their own actions and attitudes in the learning process, for example. Another issue that would be worth considering is ethics, in particular the acknowledgement of participants' real identities. My intention all along this study was not to anonymise my students' contributions, because I felt that by acknowledging their identities I would be respecting their contributions. In the end, in order to conform to the established ethical regulations of doctoral research I anonymised all the data. This is an issue for further study especially within practitioner research, which involves the teacher, their students and their own specific puzzles and issues.

Regarding criticality, some suggestions for further research involve comparing different recent framework developments of criticality, for example, the framework

that emerged from the results of this study with the framework developed by Johnston et al. (2011). Another direction for further research is to use the results of this study as a framework to develop criticality and inform criticality development in other educative practices.

Regarding arts-enriched research methods, another direction for further research would be to invite experts in the arts to the classroom to guide language students in this case in doing their artwork. Eisner (1981, 2008) highlights the need for this kind of work whereby experts in the arts work with experts or participants in other disciplines. The final art works will be of better quality and the whole enterprise more enriching for all. Also having an input from arts experts will give participants more confidence that what they are doing is valuable and can be of good quality. This could also lead to further joint projects between them such as the exhibition of the students' works in arts spaces.

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# Appendix 1

## Centre for Applied Linguistics Application for Ethical Approval MPhil/PhD Students

### A Information

Name of student:	Ana Ines Salvi
Date of registration:	September, 2013
Project title:	Being, life learning and knowledge production in EFL in Higher Education in the UK
Supervisor:	Dr. Richard Smith
CRB Clearance:	

### B Texts

*If your research does not include any textual data, please confirm this below and go to Section C*

*If all or some of your texts are not in the public domain, please explain what steps you have taken to obtain relevant permission for their collection and use. Please also complete any relevant parts of Sections C and D.*

*If some or all of your texts are in the public domain, give details of this and explain what steps you have taken to obtain any relevant permissions. When these permission have been obtained, please pass a copy to the Research Secretary to be added to your file. (You may not need to complete Sections C and D.)*

My research participants will be my own students in English as a Foreign Language related courses in Higher Education in the UK. In the consent form for participants I will ask them if I could use their work in class for research purposes. Possible texts I will use are participants' reflective written accounts, drawings, and academic essays. Some lessons will be video-recorded; and pictures of participants will be taken. Written permission will be asked so that the researcher can use this data for her PhD and possibly for the future after her PhD.

### C Participants Details

*Please describe the participants in the research including ages of children and young people where appropriate. Also specify if any participants are vulnerable e.g. as a result of learning disability.*

Participants in this study will be my own university students. They are international students doing a module or a short-course in English for Academic Purposes, or English Language Learning and Teaching. Some of them are undergraduates, and some others are postgraduate students.

Pilot study:

- 4-week English for Academic Purposes pre-session course in Beijing – university partner of a British University (Chinese students)

Research Study:

- 4-week course in English Language and Teaching at a British University (Chinese students)
- 10-week module in Academic Essay Writing (x2) (international students from different parts of the world)

[I could collect more data in subsequent similar courses in the summer of 2015 or in 2016]

#### **Respect for participants' rights and dignity**

*How will the fundamental rights and dignity of participants be respected, e.g. confidentiality, respect of cultural and religious values?*

Participants in this study are all university students in my class. What is done in the classroom as part of the course will be used as data for this research. No extra burden will be inflicted on students for research purposes.

#### **Privacy and Confidentiality**

*How will confidentiality be assured? Please address all aspects of research including protection of data records, thesis, reports/papers that might arise from the study.*

The institutions where I will be working and the participants will be kept anonymous unless they wish their names to be acknowledged. If possible I intend to devote a session to debating this issue and to devising ethical forms openly with participants so that misunderstandings are avoided and research is more democratic.

#### **D Consent**

*Will prior informed consent be obtained?*

- from participants **YES/NO**
- from others **YES/NO**

*Explain how this will be obtained. Provide details of the relevant procedures and any issues associated with them.*

On the first day of the course, participants will be informed about the research orally and consent forms will be shown. If possible, in groups, students will be encouraged to raise questions about the forms and the research. They will be informed that they can withdraw from participating at any stage, and that research and practice in this case are intertwined, rather than an extra burden

for them.

*If verbal rather than written consent is to be obtained, give reasons for this.*

Not applicable, as written consent will be obtained.

*If prior informed consent is not to be obtained, give reasons for this. If the research involves observation where consent will not be obtained, specify situations to be observed and how cultural/religious sensitivities and individual privacy will be respected.*

Not applicable.

*Will participants be explicitly informed of the student's role/status? If not, give reasons for this.*

Yes. I will explain this on the form.

*Will deception be used? If so, provide a clear justification for this and details of the method of debriefing.*

No deceptive methods will be used.

*Will participants be informed of the use to which data will be put?*

Yes.

*Will participants be told they have the option to withdraw from the study without penalty?*

Yes.

*Attach a copy of all consent forms to be used in the study.*

#### **E Security and protection**

##### **Data storage**

*Where will data be stored and what measures will be taken to ensure security?*

Data will be stored in Dropbox and in my computer - both will be password-protected.

*For how long after the completion will the data be stored? (All data must be kept at least until the examination process is complete.)*

All the data will be stored for 10 years after completion.

##### **F Protection**

*Describe the nature and degree of any risk (psychological as well as physical) to participants and the steps that will be taken to deal with this.*

Students' work in class will be used for research purposes only if they agree to participate in this study. They can withdraw from this research at any time.

**Identify any potential risks to the researcher and the procedures that will be in place for dealing with these.**

None

**How will participants' well-being be considered in the study?**

The researcher will ensure that their participation in this study contributes to and enhances their learning experience.

**How will you ensure that your research and its reporting are honest, fair and respectful to others?**

I will ensure this happens by respecting participants' decisions as expressed in their consent forms. I will also include these forms and samples of data used in the report.

**How will you ensure that the research and the evidence resulting from it are not misused?**

I will try to keep in contact with participants in order to be able to share and discuss preliminary findings and understandings with them.

#### **G Ethical dilemmas**

**How will you address any ethical dilemmas that may arise in your research? Please give details of the protocol agreed with your supervisor for reporting and action.**

I will try to keep a record of any ethical dilemma that may arise and acknowledge them when reporting my research. I will also inform and discuss them with my supervisor as and if they arise.

#### **H Authorship**

**Have you and your supervisor discussed and agreed the basis for determining authorship of published work other than your thesis? Give brief details of this.**

Yes. I will be named as author of any such work. If we write an article jointly arising from my research work, we will negotiate who is named as 'first author' depending on respective contributions.

#### **I Other issues**

**Please specify other issues not discussed above, if any, and how you will address them.**

J Signatures

Research student

*Anahei Jellei*

Date 1 July 2014

Supervisor

*Richard Sims*

Date

*3/7/14*

K Action

Action taken

- Approved
- Approved with modification or conditions - see Notes below
- Action deferred - see Notes below
- [Where applicable] CRB clearance reported to HSSREC

Name

*ANGOTH MULLER*

Date

*01/07/14*

Signature

*[Signature]*

Notes of Action

Date of Approval by Graduate Progress Committee

## Participant Information Sheet



### Research Project Title:

Being, life learning and knowledge production in EFL in Higher Education in the UK

### Names of researcher:

Ana Ines Salvi

### Supervisor:

Dr Richard Smith (Applied Linguistics)

With the support of Dr Gurminder Bhambra (Sociology)

### My research

My name is Ana Ines Salvi and I am a PhD student at the University of Warwick. I am researching perceptions of the role of Higher Education among students attending university courses in the UK. In order to do this I would like to find out about your views and your learning development in the classroom and would be most grateful if you would agree to participate.

My research will involve recording (both video and audio) some of your group work discussions, interviewing you and collecting other relevant material such as emails and course extracts over a period of 6 months.

### Confidentiality, Privacy and Participation

Participation in this project is **entirely voluntary**, and you retain the right to leave the project at any time, without explanation or justification.

The data, as indicated on the consent form, may be used for different purposes. This is hopefully to ensure that the findings are disseminated widely and with the intention of improving practice.

As a participant, you will be entitled to receive feedback and debriefing on the data collected. You will also be given access to transcripts and a copy of the research project will be made available should you wish to read it before it is submitted.

In this project all data, names, places and organisations will be anonymised. This is to protect the identities of the participants.

Thank you for considering participating in this project. If you have any questions or suggestions concerning the study, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Ana Ines Salvi

Contact Person: Ana Ines Salvi, Centre for Applied Linguistics, University of Warwick,  
Coventry CV4 7AL, UK. Email: [Ana.Salvi@warwick.ac.uk](mailto:Ana.Salvi@warwick.ac.uk)

## Participation & Recording Consent Form

**Research Project Title:**

Being, life learning and knowledge production in EFL in Higher Education in the UK

**Names of researcher:**

Ana Ines Balvi

**Supervisor:**

Dr Richard Smith (Applied Linguistics, University of Warwick)

With the support of Dr Gurminder Bhambra (Sociology, University of Warwick)

I confirm that I have read and understood the Information Sheet for the above project and that I agree to take part in the study as described. I confirm that I have had the opportunity to ask any questions that I may have and that I may keep the Information Sheet for my records.

As part of the project photographic, audio and/or video recordings will be made of your participation and work. Please indicate below all uses of the data that you are willing to consent to. Records will only be used in ways that you agree to. In any use of these records, names, places and organisations will be anonymised.

Please use  (for yes) or  (for no) in the table below.

		Transcribe of Recording	Audio Recording	Video Recording	My written work	My posters and artwork	Photographs of myself
1	The data can be studied by the researcher for use in the research project.						
2	The data can be used for academic and professional publications.						
3	Extracts from the data can be used in training and assessment materials.						
4	Extracts from the data can be showed/played to students or professionals interested in the research project.						
5	Extracts from the data can be shown in presentations to non-specialist groups.						
6	The data can be made available to other academic researchers.						

I have read the above descriptions and give my consent for the use of records as indicated in the table above.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ (please print)

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Person: Ana Ines Balvi, Centre for Applied Linguistics, University of Warwick,  
Coventry CV4 7AL, UK. Email: [Ana.Balvi@warwick.ac.uk](mailto:Ana.Balvi@warwick.ac.uk)

## Appendix 2

### Participation & Recording Consent Form

**Research Project Title:** A Participatory Practitioner Investigation of ‘Knowing’ in Higher Education via Live and Arts-informed Methods in ELT

**Researcher:** Ana Ines Salvi

**Supervisor:** Dr. Richard Smith (Applied Linguistics, University of Warwick)

I confirm that I have read and understood the Information Sheet for the above project and that I agree to take part in the study as described. I confirm that I have had the opportunity to ask any questions that I may have and that I may keep the Information Sheet for my records.

As part of the project photographic, audio and video recordings will be made of your participation and work. Please indicate below all uses of the data that you are willing to consent to. Records will only be used in ways that you agree to. In any use of these records, names, places and organisations will be anonymised.

**Please CIRCLE the correct option: YES/ NO**

1. Ana can use the transcription of and audio and video recordings of my discussions and presentations in class for her doctoral study, for research publications and in conferences. YES/ NO
2. Ana can use photographic data of my posters and my artwork for her doctoral study, for research publications and in conferences. YES/ NO
3. Ana can use photographs of myself working in class for her doctoral study, for research publications and in conferences. YES/ NO
4. Ana can use my written work for her doctoral study, for research publications and in conferences. YES/ NO
5. Ana can use my real name for her doctoral study, for research publications and in conferences. YES/ NO
6. Ana can use a pseudonym to refer to my views for her doctoral study, for research publications and in conferences. YES/ NO
7. Ana can make her doctoral study available through social media. YES/ NO

*I have read the above descriptions and give my consent for the use of records as indicated above.*

Name \_\_\_\_\_ (please print)

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix 3

### Participant Information Sheet

#### Research Project Title:

A Participatory Practitioner Investigation of ‘Knowing’ in Higher Education via Live and Arts-informed Methods in ELT

#### Names of researcher:

Ana Ines Salvi

#### Supervisor:

Dr Richard Smith (Applied Linguistics, University of Warwick)

#### My research

My name is Ana Ines Salvi and I would be interested in generating space for my own students to engage in practitioner research by reflecting on their own learning, on the nature of knowledge production, and on the role of the university, as part and parcel of this Essay Writing module.

This practitioner research involves keeping records of class discussions and presentations, your reflections, posters, and artwork over the period of this course.

#### Confidentiality, Privacy and Participation

Participation in this project is **entirely voluntary**, and you retain the right to leave the project **at any time**, without explanation or justification.

The data, as indicated on the consent form, may be used for different purposes. This is hopefully to ensure that the findings are disseminated widely and with the intention of improving practice.

You will receive feedback and debriefing on the data collected. You will also be given access to transcripts and a copy of the research project will be made available if you wish to read it before it is submitted.

In this project all data, names, places and organisations will be anonymised unless expressed otherwise in the consent form.

It would be great to do research together. If you have any questions or suggestions concerning the study, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Ana Ines Salvi

## **Appendix 4**

Semi-structured interview questions:

1. How do you feel about making decisions about your learning in the classroom? How do you feel about having opportunities to choose what is best for yourself regarding your learning?
2. Do you think that being reflective about your learning helps you in any way? How?
3. Do you think that expressing yourself through art has been of benefit? How? Do you think that you can express ideas and emotions through art that you cannot express otherwise?
4. What do you think is the role of higher education? What should universities be for? Who should universities be for?
5. What is to be critical like? How do you feel about being critical of different issues? Do you think you have been critical in the classroom? Do you feel that you could have been more critical but decided not to?

## Appendix 5

### Week 1

Time	Monday 21 <sup>st</sup> July	Tuesday 22 <sup>nd</sup> July		Wednesday 23 <sup>rd</sup> July		Thursday 24 <sup>th</sup> July		Friday 25 <sup>th</sup> July	
9.00-10.30	9.30am meet at Bus-stop  Welcome Introduction  A1.11 SP/CP	A and B 9-10 Preparation for Cultural Visits  A.11/SP		A  <b>(9-11)</b>  Introduction to Project Work  S1.88 AL	B  Introduction to Academic Writing: Writing a Questionnaire/ Introduction to research  BO.41/43 AS	A  Introduction to Academic Writing: Writing a Questionnaire/ Introduction to research  BO.41/43 AS	B  <b>(9-11)</b>  Introduction to Project Work  S1.88 AL	A  Education Technology  A1.11 FYC	B  Aspects of British Culture  BO.41/43 AS
Break		BREAK 10.45-11.15		BREAK		BREAK		BREAK	
11.00-12.30	A & B together  11.00-12.00  Living in the UK: the Great Quiz _____CP____ 12.15 <b>Group Photo</b>	A  Welcome to Britain  A1.11 CP	B  Welcome to Britain  BO.41/43 AS	A 11.30-12.30  <b>Independent Research</b> Task/Library or Teaching Grid	B Introduction to Academic Writing: Writing a Questionnaire/ Introduction to Research  BO.41/43 AS	A  Introduction to Academic Writing: Writing a Questionnaire  BO.41/43 AS	B 11.30-12.30  <b>Independent Research</b> Task/Library or the Learning Grid	A  Aspects of British Culture  BO.41/43 AS	B  Education Technology  A1.11 FYC
Lunch	<b>Welcome Lunch</b> 12.30	LUNCH							
2.00-4.00	A and B Campus Tour <b>2.15</b> Tour of the Learning Grid AS/CP	2.00-4.00 Guest Lecture: GS Testing A1.11		A Aspects of British Culture S1.88 CP	B Aspects of British Culture BO.41/43 AS	Cultural visit Depart at 1.30 Leave at 5pm AS		pm Questionnaire Task Completion/ Independent Study  <i>Saturday and Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> July Independent Travel arrangements</i>	

Week 2

Time	Monday 28 <sup>th</sup> July		Tuesday 29 <sup>th</sup> July		Wednesday 30 <sup>th</sup> July		Thursday 31 <sup>st</sup> July		Friday 1 <sup>st</sup> August	
9.00-10.30	A Academic English Skills: Listening BO.41/43 AS	B Communication Skills: Functional and Social English A1.11 CP	A <b>(9-11)</b> Project Work A1.11 AL	B Academic Writing Skills: Report Writing BO.41/43 AS	A Academic Writing Skills: Report Writing BO.41/43 AS	B <b>(9-11)</b> Project Work S1.88 AL	A Advertising in the UK: Language of Advertising S1.88 FYC	B Integrated Skills BO.41/43 SR	A Festivals in the UK A1.11 SR	B Aspects of British Culture BO.41/43 AS
Break	BREAK		BREAK		BREAK		BREAK		BREAK	
11.00-12.30	A Communication Skills: Functional and Social English A1.11 CP	B Academic English Skills: Listening BO.41/43 AS	<b>11.30-12.30</b> <b>Independent Research</b> Task/Library or Teaching Grid	B Academic Writing Skills: Report Writing BO.41/43 AS	A Academic Writing Skills: Report Writing BO.41/43 AS	<b>11.30-12.30</b> <b>Independent Research</b> Task/Library or Teaching Grid	A Integrated Skills BO.41/43 SR	B Advertising in the UK: Language of Advertising S1.88 FYC	A Aspects of British Culture BO.41/43 AS	B Festivals in the UK A1.11 SR
Lunch	LUNCH									
2.00-4.00	Independent Study for Project Work		A Aspects of British Culture A1.11 CP	B Aspects of British Culture BO.41/43 AS	A Aspects of British Culture CP/S1.88	B Aspects of British Culture: BO.41/43 AS	Cultural visit Depart <b>Earlier Time at 1.00</b> Leave at 5pm SR		pm Independent Study <i>Saturday 2nd Independent Travel Arrangements</i> <i>Sunday, 3<sup>rd</sup> August move to Home Stay</i>	

Week 3

Time	Monday 4 <sup>th</sup> August		Tuesday 5 <sup>th</sup> August		Wednesday 6 <sup>th</sup> August		Thursday 7 <sup>th</sup> August		Friday 8 <sup>th</sup> August	
9.00-10.30	A Communication Skills A1.11 AS	B Shakespeare Unlocked: Using the Voice  Humanities Drama Studio/CP	A The Canon of English Literature:  <i>The Writing Room</i>	B Communication Skills A1.11 AS	A Shakespeare Unlocked: Using the Voice  Humanities Drama Studio CP	B Integrated Skills:  S1.88 SR	A Integrated Skills  S1.88 SR	B The Canon of English Literature:  <i>The Writing Room</i>	A Academic English Skills: Listening to Lectures and Discussion Skills A1.11 SR	B Academic English Skills: Listening to Lectures and Discussion Skills BO.41/43 AS
Break	BREAK		BREAK		BREAK		BREAK		BREAK	
11.00-12.30	A Communication Skills:  A1.11 AS	B Shakespeare Unlocked: Using the Voice  Humanities Drama Studio/CP	A The Canon of English Literature:  <i>The Writing Room</i>	B Communication Skills A1.11 AS	A Shakespeare Unlocked: Using the Voice  Humanities Drama Studio CP	B Integrated Skills  S1.88 SR	A Integrated Skills  S1.88 SR	B The Canon of English Literature:  <i>The Writing Room</i>	A Academic English Skills: Listening to Lectures and Discussion Skills BO.41/43 AS	B Academic English Skills: Listening to Lectures and Discussion Skills A1.11 SR
LUNCH										
2.00-4.00	A and B Independent Study for Project Presentations		2-4 A and B Guest Lecture: Nigel Prentice British Architecture A1.11/NP		A Presentation Skills: BO.41/43 SR	B Presentation Skills: S1.88 CP	pm Cultural Visit Depart at 1:30pm AS		pm Independent Study  <i>Saturday and Sunday, 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> August Independent Travel Arrangements</i>	

Week 4

Time	Monday 11 <sup>th</sup> August		Tuesday 12 <sup>th</sup> August	Wednesday 13 <sup>th</sup> August	Thursday 14 <sup>th</sup> August	Friday 15 <sup>th</sup> August
9.00	A	B	A and B <b>9.30-11.30</b>	A and B	<b>9.00 – 12.30</b> Groups A and B CP +  Preparation & Rehearsals for Project Presentations  The Learning Grid Presentation Rooms A and B (Lists of timings and groups will be on the doors – please check your slot)	<b>Final Project Presentations</b>          A1.11/CP and Tutors
	Integrated Skills	Integrated Skills	<b>Guest Lecture/Workshop: SZ</b>  ‘English for Young Learners’	9-12.30		
10.30	A1.11 CP	BO.41/43 SR	A1.11	Independent  Preparation for Presentations The Learning Grid		
Break	BREAK		BREAK			
11.00	A	B	A and B			
	Integrated Skills	Integrated Skills	English for Young Learners			
12.30	BO.41/43 SR	A1.11 CP	A1.11			
Lunch	LUNCH					<b>Farewell Lunch</b> 12.30
2.00	A and B		A and B	Independent Study	pm Cultural Visit:	Packing Suitcases!
4.00	Independent Presentation Preparation		Lecture: Student Life at Warwick and Course Reflections		Depart at 1:30pm	
			A1.11/SR			

