



universität
wien

DIPLOMARBEIT / DIPLOMA THESIS

Titel der Diplomarbeit / Title of the Diploma Thesis

„Learner Autonomy in English Medium Teaching
and Learning: Fostering Autonomous Learners in
the International Baccalaureate“

verfasst von / submitted by

Daniel Pötscher / Poetscher

angestrebter akademischer Grad / in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the
degree of

Magister der Philosophie (Mag. phil.)

Wien, 2017 / Vienna, 2017

Studienkennzahl lt. Studienblatt /
degree programme code as it appears on
the student record sheet:

A 190 344 299

Studienrichtung lt. Studienblatt /
degree programme as it appears on
the student record sheet:

Lehramt UF Englisch UF Psychologie und
Philosophie

Betreut von / Supervisor:

Univ.-Prof. Mag. Dr. Christiane Dalton-Puffer

Table of Contents

LIST OF FIGURES	5
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	6
<u>1. INTRODUCTION.....</u>	<u>7</u>
<u>2. DEFINING LEARNER AUTONOMY</u>	<u>9</u>
2.1. FREEDOM AND RESPONSIBILITY.....	11
2.2. INTRINSIC MOTIVATION AND SELF-REGULATION	12
2.3. STRATEGIES AND REFLECTION ON CHOICE OF STRATEGY	13
2.4. LIFELONG LEARNING.....	16
<u>3. THE INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE.....</u>	<u>18</u>
3.1. THE CURRICULUM	20
3.1.1. The Diploma Programme (DP)	24
3.2. LEARNERS.....	28
3.3. TEACHERS.....	30
3.4. PARENTS	34
<u>4. EMPIRICAL PART: LEARNER AUTONOMY.....</u>	<u>37</u>
4.1. TEACHER INTERVIEWS.....	38
4.1.1. Aims of the Teacher Study	38
4.1.2. Participants.....	39
4.1.3. Designing the Instrument.....	40
4.1.4. Data Collection	45
4.1.5. Results and Analysis	47
4.2. STUDENT INTERVIEWS	52
4.2.1. Aims of the Student Study.....	52
4.2.2. Participants.....	54
4.2.3. Designing the Instrument.....	55
4.2.4. Data Collection	58
4.2.5. Results and Analysis	59
<u>5. FOSTERING LEARNER AUTONOMY.....</u>	<u>69</u>
5.1. BY MOTIVATING STUDENTS	69
Students' Mindset	69
Intrinsic Motivation	71
5.2. BY TRAINING TEACHERS.....	73
Assessment-Capable Learners.....	73
Classroom Activities	76
Cultural Differences.....	77
5.3. BY TRAINING STUDENTS	78

Reflecting on Learning Style	78
Independence and Freedom	80
5.4. BY USING ICT IN THE CLASSROOM	81
Online Resources	81
Home Learning	83
Dangers and Possible Challenges	84
5.5. THREATS TO AUTONOMY	85
Teachers	85
Students.....	87
Language.....	88
 <u>6. SUMMARY & CONCLUSION</u>	<u>90</u>
 <u>7. REFERENCES</u>	<u>92</u>
 <u>8. APPENDIX.....</u>	<u>100</u>

List of Figures

- Figure 3.1. IB Wheel Models.
- Figure 4.1. Teacher Overview.
- Figure 4.2. Learner Characteristics.
- Figure 4.3. Teacher Definitions.
- Figure 4.4. Teacher Questionnaire Results.
- Figure 4.5. Teacher Responses on Language Aspects.
- Figure 4.6. Student Overview.
- Figure 4.7. Student Questionnaire.
- Figure 4.8. Student Definitions.
- Figure 4.9. Student Questionnaire Results.
- Figure 4.10. Representative Learner Profiles.

List of Abbreviations

CAS	Creativity, Activity, Service
CP	Career-Related Programme
DP	Diploma Programme
EE	Extended Essay
EMI	English as a Medium of Instruction
IB	International Baccalaureate
IBO	International Baccalaureate Organization
ICT	Informational & Communication Technology
L1	First Language
LA	Learner Autonomy
LLL	Lifelong Learning
MK	Missionary Kids
MYP	Middle Years Programme
PD	Professional Development
PK	Preacher Kids
PYP	Primary Years Programme
SBI	Strategy-Based Instruction
TCK	Third Culture Kids
TOK	Theory of Knowledge
UbD	Understanding by Design
VARK	Visual, Aural, Read/Write, Kinesthetic

*Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day;
teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime*

- unknown

1. INTRODUCTION

According to Noam Chomsky, “[e]ducation is really aimed at helping students get to the point where they can learn on their own because that is what you're going to do during your life (Chomsky 2013: 21:22 - 21:34). Getting students to be able to learn on their own can be a difficult enterprise. If this is supposed to happen in an international setting, where the language of instruction is different from most students’ first language, it can be even more of a challenge. The *International Baccalaureate*® (IB) provides an education framework for students all over the world that aims at achieving this goal. However, it is up to the teachers and their learners to make this happen. The goal of this thesis is to look at how autonomy can be fostered in general, how it is currently fostered at IB World Schools, and what the possible challenges are in this journey. I will take a closer look at the concept *learner autonomy* by providing an account of some of its features, outlining the IB curriculum, and discussing the role of teachers and learners in greater detail when fostering learner autonomy.

Learners in the *International Baccalaureate*® (IB) are described in several ways: They are *inquirers* who are curious and independent, *knowledgeable thinkers* who are critical and creative, *communicators* who can collaborate in several languages, *principled* and *caring* individuals who take responsibility for themselves and others, *open-minded risk-takers* who try out new things, and *reflective* learners who can *balance* various aspects of their lives. Of course, I am referring to the ten attributes of the IB learner profile (cf. appendix: 170). While these ten attributes constitute a description of an already well-rounded young individual, I personally feel that there is a need to add an eleventh attribute to this list, namely *autonomous*. While autonomy may not be specifically mentioned in the IB learner profile, it does occur on several occasions in official IB documents (see e.g. IBO 2011a: 4; 2015a: 28).

Thus, autonomy is an integral part of the IB curriculum, though it has not received much attention yet. Since most IB schools use English as the medium of instruction (EMI), I decided to create a link between fostering autonomy and the most common language setting of an IB school, EMI. I will take a closer look at how autonomy is fostered at IB schools and to what extent teachers consider language aspects in the classroom. Most IB classroom settings are highly diverse and multilingual, which often constitutes an additional (language) barrier for effective learning. Student and teacher data on autonomous learning and learning through the medium of a language that is different from one's first language will be collected by conducting interviews.

This thesis can be divided into four main parts: Two theory parts outlining the concept of learner autonomy and the International Baccalaurate, and two empirical parts in which I will explain my investigation and present the results by linking them back to the theory. It is the result of a one-year-long journey that required (or rather allowed) me to travel abroad and speak to educators and students from all parts of the world. It was a long, yet fascinating journey and I am proud to be able to finally present it in the form of my final thesis as a graduating student at the University of Vienna and a prospective IB educator.

2. DEFINING LEARNER AUTONOMY

The concept of *learner autonomy* is a rather ambiguous one as there are many different definitions available in current research. One of the most cited definitions used in contemporary academia is one by Holec (1981: 3) who defines learner autonomy as “the ability to take charge of one’s own learning”. He elaborates further on what skills are generally expected of an autonomous learner. To summarize, an autonomous learner is capable of:

- determining the objectives;
 - defining the contents and progressions;
 - selecting methods and techniques to be used;
 - monitoring the procedure of acquisition properly speaking (rhythm, time, place, etc)
 - evaluating what has been acquired
- (Holec 1981: 3)

Okumus (2015: 86) summarizes Little’s (1991) definitions of learner autonomy that he proposed in his book *Learner autonomy 1: Definitions, issues and problems* as follows: “Autonomous learners have the capacity to determine realistic and reachable goals, select appropriate methods and techniques to be used, monitor their own learning process, and evaluate the progress of their own learning”. This constitutes a list of skills or capabilities that every autonomous learner should have in order to be identified as such according to Little (1991). As this set of skills is similar to those outlined in definition of Holec (1981: 3) above, I will use it as my main point of reference for the rest of this paper and in my empirical research (see chapter 4; appendix: 8 & 65).

Okumus (2015: 86) also provides a concise summary of characteristics of an autonomous learner by Dam (1990), Deci & Ryan (1985), Bandura (1989), and Doyal and Gough (1991) which I found to be suitable to be used for my empirical data collection as well:

[A]n autonomous learner is an active participant in the social processes of learning and an active interpreter of new information in terms of what she/he already and uniquely knows. Autonomous people are intrinsically motivated, perceive themselves to be in control of their decision-making, take responsibility for the outcomes of their actions and have confidence in themselves

(Okumus 2015: 86)

These two summaries will form the heart of my empirical investigation on who autonomous learners are, what kind of characteristics they have, and what kind of behavior they tend to show.

To further my discussion of defining the term *learner autonomy*, it should be noted that *learner autonomy* is not the only term that is used in the literature. As has been pointed out by Ivanovska (2015: 353), educators the world over often use terms such as “‘learner independence’, ‘self-direction’, ‘autonomous learning’, ‘independent learning’” to refer to similar or identical concepts of learner autonomy. Thus, many of those terms can and indeed are used interchangeably in contemporary research.

As I am focusing on English-medium teaching and learning in this paper, I took a closer look at the role the language of instruction plays when fostering learner autonomy, and to what extent teachers take possible obstacles related to English being a foreign language for their students into consideration. The International Baccalaureate (henceforth: IB) in particular puts a strong emphasis on language in its program¹ and curriculum design. Various papers and documents published by the IB also specifically mention that “every teacher is a language teacher” (see e.g. IBO 2011a: 25; IBO n.d.a: 1-3; Davy 2011: 7). I will briefly discuss learner autonomy in language learning by focusing on the following aspects: the importance of giving freedom and transferring responsibility to the student, the interplay of intrinsic motivation and self-regulation, in how far the choice of appropriate strategies is crucial as well as an evaluation and reflection on that choice. Finally, I will discuss a concept called life-long learning and how it relates to learner autonomy.

These sub-sections will form the theoretical foundation for my empirical investigation on learner autonomy, in which I would like to find out more about the characteristics of autonomous learners, the kind of learning activities they engage

¹ Note that the IB uses British English spelling conventions to refer to its *Programme(s)*, while this paper uses American English spelling conventions and will therefore use *program* to refer to the general educational framework.

in at their school, and in how far their teachers help them become more autonomous learners.

2.1. Freedom and Responsibility

Espinosa (2015: 115) highlights the fact that “autonomy [in language learning] allows the learner to take the lead of his/her learning process [...] because it empowers him/her to be an independent user of the language”. This goes hand in hand with the notion that autonomous learners are learners who require a certain amount of freedom in their learning (Benson 2007: 22; Little 1991: 4-5; Trebbi 2008: 45). However, any freedom one gets always comes with a great deal of responsibility. This has also been pointed out by Cotterall (2000: 110) who published a paper on how learner autonomy can be fostered through the curriculum in which she states:

Language courses which aim to promote learner autonomy will incorporate means of *transferring responsibility* for aspects of the language learning process (such as setting goals, selecting learning strategies, and evaluating progress) *from the teacher to the learner* [my emphasis].

In an earlier paper, Cotterall (1995: 220) explains that one reason why learner autonomy should be promoted is because it teaches students that the teacher will not always be here to scaffold and support their learning. Another benefit of fostering learner autonomy is that learners can work more efficiently as they do not have to wait for someone to help them when they are stuck (ibid: 220). This is a typical Montessori approach, commonly known by the popular saying: “Help me do it myself” (DeBruin 2010: 139), which underscores one of the main principles of Montessori education as postulated by Maria Montessori’s grandson, Mario Montessori (1976: 55):

Children want to become adults and, prompted by their inner needs, strive to *achieve this goal independently* [my emphasis]. Education must assist them in this task of inner development. In order to offer them adequate help, it is necessary to understand their psychic activity from the point of view of this final aim.

Maria Montessori is often considered to be the founder of the idea that learners need to be given more freedom and responsibility. She also seemed to be a firm believer of the idea that children can and will be autonomous in their learning if they are provided with the right learning environment, as the following quote illustrates:

She gave children an appropriate environment and guided freedom within it so that they could act according to their inner needs, rhythm, and tempo, and as a result, they exhibited characteristics not generally attributed to them. These included deep and prolonged concentration, the repetition of exercises for their own sake, an urge to make a maximum effort, control of movements, a sense of order and other phenomena.
(Montessori 1976: 28).

One explanation for this behavior could be that “freedom to choose and to have choices [...] is a prerequisite to motivation” (Dörnyei 2001: 103). This would suggest that a choice-based learning environment will most likely lead to increased intrinsic motivation in learners.

2.2. Intrinsic Motivation and Self-Regulation

In the field of psychology, motivation is generally divided into two types of motivation: intrinsic and extrinsic. Brown and Douglas (2000: 164f) define these two types of motivation as follows: [t]hose who learn for their own self-perceived needs and goals are intrinsically oriented and those who pursue a goal only to receive an external reward from someone else are extrinsically motivated”. In general, only intrinsic motivation is associated with learner autonomy (Okumus 2015: 86; Deci & Ryan 1985: 246-248; Bruner 1962: 88). Unfortunately, activities that promote intrinsic motivation and enable intrinsically motivated students to pursue their goals are rarely seen in the average classroom. It is also a common belief that learner autonomy may be a capacity we are born with but is actually then “suppressed by institutional education” (Benson & Voller 1997: 2). Similarly, Schober et al. (2013: 115) claim that several studies have shown that students become less autonomous the longer they stay in school (cf. Peetsma et al. 2005). Thus, there is a need for fostering autonomy and intrinsic motivation.

A definition of intrinsic motivation that focuses more on the drive for inquiry is provided by Ryan and Deci (2000: 70) who define intrinsic motivation as “an inherent tendency to seek out novelty and challenges, to extend and exercise one’s capacities, to explore, and to learn”. While most studies attempt to measure motivation by observing “motivated behavior or motivational intensity” in individuals, a psychological concept called “self-regulation” may actually be a better term for pinpointing characteristics of motivation as it describes behavior and

activities normally seen in motivated individuals (Iwaniec 2014: 69). By looking at a definition of self-regulation, it becomes evident that it indeed shares many features of learner autonomy: “[Self-regulation is] the degree to which individuals are metacognitively, motivationally, and behaviourally active participants in their own learning process” (Zimmerman 1989: 4). Zimmerman (2002: 67) provides a model of self-regulation that is structured in three phases of learning:

- forethought phase (any processes before the actual learning)
- performance phase (processes during the learning)
- self-reflection (after the learning)

In the *forethought phase*, the learner analyzes the task, sets goals and expectations, and seeks intrinsic motivation to complete the task. During the *performance phase*, appropriate strategies are chosen and reflected upon. The learner may experiment with various strategies in order to find the most effective one. Finally, the *self-reflection phase* aims at judging one’s performance and measuring it against a certain standard. This is also the phase in which the learner will evaluate his or her emotional satisfaction after completing a task, thereby also evaluating his or her motivation. Depending on those evaluations, the learner may feel more motivated to continue his or her efforts, or decide to cease all efforts and come up with another strategy that might be more appropriate (Zimmermann 2002: 67-68).

I chose to elaborate on this model as I believe it demonstrates well the learning processes of an autonomous learner. The model emphasizes the right choice of strategies and the reflection process that comes after this selection.

2.3. Strategies and Reflection on Choice of Strategy

As explained in the previous section, self-regulation entails choosing appropriate strategies for the current task. An autonomous learner will always have a wide repertoire of learning strategies at hand and will know which of these strategies are most effective for a particular task and whether they are in line with the learner’s own learning preferences. My personal observations during private tutoring sessions with my students have often shown that students who take private tutoring lessons in a particular subject do not necessarily struggle in the subject itself, but

rather in the way they study for this subject. Some students may be good at revising contents and choosing the right strategies to do so; however, they might not be as successful when it comes to learning a language, for instance. A student seeking additional help outside of class will most likely be on the lower end of the scale for autonomous learning. Thus, one major characteristic of an autonomous learner is to be a reflective learner. The importance of goal-setting, monitoring, and reflection has also been pointed out by Cotterall (2000: 116) who suggests that courses that promote learner autonomy should end with reflective questions such as:

- What did you do today?
- What did you learn today?
- What are you going to do differently as a result of today's class?

(Cotterall 2000: 115)

Questions like the ones above may be recorded in a journal that learners keep to reflect on their progress (this has also been suggested in Cotterall 2000: 115; Dion 2011: 65-68; Ramírez Espinosa 2015: 124-125; Little 1991: 52; King 2011: 257ff; Lew & Schmidt 2011: 530ff; and many more). Utilizing reflection tools such as the one above can be an important strategy that can help to become a more reflected learner, which is an important aspect for any learner in the International Baccalaureate (cf. IB Learner Profiles, appendix: 170).

An interesting division of autonomy has been made by Littlewood (1999: 75-76) who distinguishes between “proactive” and “reactive” autonomy. This distinction has been set out in order to cater to definitions within different cultural spheres. When we speak about autonomy in the West, we tend to set a strong focus on the individual and all actions set out by the individual. In other words, *proactive autonomy* “regulates the direction of activity as well as the activity itself” (Littlewood 1999: 75). *Reactive autonomy* on the other hand “does not create its own directions but, once a direction has been initiated, enables learners to organize their resources autonomously in order to reach their goal” (Littlewood 1999: 75). This means that reactive autonomy entails leaving the choice of strategies to the students, while proactive autonomy will most likely limit the range of strategies that can be applied by the student. While this was a distinction between the concepts of autonomy in the East and West, a study conducted by Noels et al. (2014: 142) did not confirm Littlewood’s claim that only students in the East prefer a teaching approach that fosters reactive autonomy over proactive autonomy. In fact, the

results showed that all students, “regardless of their cultural background, preferred reactive to proactive autonomy” (ibid: 142). This shows that students generally do seem to prefer having some guidance for their learning as well as continuous feedback throughout their learning process (ibid: 143). However, more importantly, what this also means is that learner autonomy does not necessarily mean that the learner is entirely independent and chooses his or her own strategies. In many cases, it might just refer to the fact that

learners work independently on tasks, but it is still the teacher who sets the agenda for learning. It is the teacher who defines what counts as relevant knowledge, selects learning methods and controls evaluation (Littlewood 1999: 76).

In the end, it is often the case that due to certain curriculum requirements or educational philosophies a school needs to adhere to, that the teacher must be in control of what kind of learning is happening in class. However, fostering learner autonomy is almost always accompanied by training students how to learn. For instance, Ramirez Espinosa (2015: 120-121) points out that autonomy and learner-training always go hand in hand and that it is important to provide training to students that “aim[s] at helping students know how languages are learned, who is a successful language learner, and why autonomy is desirable in language learning” (ibid: 121). Similarly, Nguyen and Gu (2013: 12) emphasize the importance of teaching learners useful strategies on how to learn:

So far, the most convincing evidence that LA [learner autonomy] promotes learning comes from learner-based approaches of strategy training. Some of these studies focus on improving students’ metacognition and self-regulation skills; some direct students’ attention to task analysis; and others involve comprehensive training packages that attempt to improve both metacognitive management of learning and the analysis of tasks. (ibid: 12)

Teaching learners strategies in class in order to facilitate their learning is often referred to as *Strategy-Based Instruction* (SBI). Rubin et al. (2007: 142) made an effort to compare several models of SBI and created a list of four steps that all models of SBI seem to share:

1. Raising awareness of the strategies
2. Teacher presentation and modeling of strategies
3. Multiple practice opportunities of strategies
4. Evaluation of strategies

(abbreviated from Rubin et al. 2007: 142).

The model presented here has a lot in common with the model of self-regulation by Zimmerman (2002: 67) presented above. Both models put much emphasis on learner strategies and the application and trial of different strategies for various tasks. Once the strategies have been chosen and applied, students are expected to reflect on and evaluate their choice in both models. This shows that motivation, self-regulation, use and choice of appropriate strategies, as well as reflection on learning are all closely interrelated and all constitute an important part of the concept learner autonomy.

2.4. Lifelong Learning

The term lifelong learning (henceforth: LLL) is generally the most commonly way to refer to “all learning activity undertaken throughout life, with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and competences within a personal, civic, social, and/or employment-related perspective” (European Commission 2001: 9). However, in the 70s, all of the following terms have been used: “‘lifelong education’, ‘lifelong learning’, ‘recurrent education’, and ‘*education permanente*’” (Hager 2011: 13). In the literature, LLL is often associated with adult education and a strong sense of culture, society, and community (see e.g. Illeris 2006: 15ff; Purcell 2006: 207ff: 36). While this may be a valid approach to LLL, it is not very relevant for my purposes. What I would like to show in this section is that the two concepts LLL and learner autonomy are closely related and that in fact autonomous learners will most probably become lifelong learners.

Another definition for LLL provided by Laal (2011: 471) is “the continuous building of skills and knowledge during one’s life, that occurs through experiences faced [throughout a] lifetime.” It is those experiences outside of class, when there is no teacher available, that are important for our learners. Their approach to those experiences and the choices they make afterwards, establishes whether a learner is indeed a lifelong learner or not. Two concepts that are prerequisites of LLL are intrinsic motivation and self-regulation (Lüftenegger 2012: 28). According to Lüftenegger et al. (2012: 28), “[o]nly when learning is driven by internal sources and can be self-managed can successful LLL be ensured without a permanent

dependence on environmental enhancement.” Thus, by teaching students how to be autonomous, they are also taught how to deal with experiences and make sense of things in the outside world without any additional help. Lüftenegger et al. (2012: 29) also claim that there are four “determinants” of LLL: high interest, goal orientation, self-efficacy, and monitoring and learning assessment among pupils. All of those four determinants are also part of learner autonomy and play a crucial role in any learning process. One concept that is new here is self-efficacy, which is the “belief in one’s capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments” (Bandura 1997: 3). In other words, it is the belief of a student that he or she is capable of doing something in order to reach his or her goals. The degree of self-efficacy a student believes to have has a major effect on his or her motivation to learn. Thus, LLL can be seen as an interplay between autonomy, intrinsic motivation, and the ability to combine the two in a constructive way.

The importance of LLL is also evident in several IB documents that make explicit references to this concept (IBO 2013a: 3, 9; Hare 2010: 3, 6, 7). Additionally, LLL is explicitly mentioned in the final part of the IB mission statement:

The International Baccalaureate® aims to [...] encourage students across the world to become active, compassionate and *lifelong learners* [my emphasis] who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right.

Thus, LLL constitutes a major part of all IB programs and should therefore be promoted in all authorized IB World Schools.

3. THE INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE

The International Baccalaureate® (IB), formerly known as IBO (International Baccalaureate Organization), is an international non-profit organization offering four programs for different age levels. As of March 2017, 4,655 schools worldwide offer one or more of these programs with the vast majority being offered in The Americas (IBO 2017a).

The IB was founded in 1968 when it first offered the Diploma Programme, out of which all other programs slowly emerged. It was first introduced in Switzerland, France, Iran, Uruguay, and the United States and then gradually spread out across the globe (IBO n.d.b., quoted in Hill & Saxton 2014: 42). The aim of the IB always was to provide a curriculum that rests on three main pillars:

- Develop critical thinking skills, holistic learning, life-long education, and affective education via community service;
 - Foster international mindedness, an appreciation of multiple perspectives, promotion of intercultural understanding, and consideration of solutions to major global issues leading to world peace; and
 - Offer a globally recognised university entrance qualification, thus facilitating student mobility across frontiers.
- (Hill & Saxton 2014: 44)

The IB today is still an educational program that emphasizes exactly those three pillars above through its three core subjects:

1. **Theory of Knowledge (TOK)**
2. **Creativity, Activity, Service (CAS)**; formerly known as Creativity, Action, Service)
3. **Extended Essay (EE)**

TOK fosters critical thinking by enabling students to reflect on knowledge itself, their own knowledge, as well as that of others (IBO 2013b: 10ff). CAS aims at realizing the holistic element of the Diploma Programme, mainly through strengthening the students' personal development and emphasizing a sense of community (IBO 2015a: 8ff). Finally, the EE should “promote high-level research and writing skills” (IBO 2007a: 5) which will equip students with all the necessary tools needed for academic inquiry at university-level.

The subjects of the IB in combination with the three core subjects make it a rigorous academic program that generally enjoys a high reputation among educators, as the IB itself also claims on its website: “The IB has a hard-earned reputation for high standards of teaching, pedagogical leadership and student achievement” (IBO 2017a). Its mission is

to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect.

To this end the organization works with schools, governments and international organizations to develop challenging programmes of international education and rigorous assessment.

These programmes encourage students across the world to become active, compassionate and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right.

(IBO 2017a).

Due to its academic rigor and high international standards, as well as its thorough authorization process, the IB nowadays is considered a truly international qualification that is widely accepted around the world and is often (unofficially) considered to be a prestigious university-entry qualification. Although the IB does not consider itself prestigious or elitist in any way, other sources suggest otherwise. For instance, the British newspaper *The Independent* published an article titled “The IB develops the students top universities want” in 2013 (Ricks 2013). In this article, the author made claims such as:

- “it [the IB] is the best possible preparation for university, for the workplace, and more importantly, for life”
- “in the US, the IB Diploma is a sought-after passport to top universities from Stanford to Yale”
- “Employers worldwide know that IB students know a lot, and more, can do things”

Criticism on the IB is rarely seen and it can be assumed that the IB puts in quite a lot of effort to protect their programs and their reputation. The IB does not just offer academic programs for schools worldwide, it also puts much emphasis on research in education by cooperating with universities worldwide, as well as conducting their own research on their programs. It regularly publishes its *key findings* and even

administers its own research database² (IBO 2017b). However, none of these findings are ever critical of the IB. Thus, these *key findings* may not be the best source for a critical academic inquiry.

Nevertheless, the purpose of this paper is not to evaluate the IB as a qualification itself; it is rather an attempt to show the ways in which it may or may not foster autonomous behavior in students. The main purpose of this section is to give the reader who is unfamiliar with the IB a brief overview of the curriculum, the teachers who work in an IB environment, and an insight into what kind of students and parents choose this educational path.

3.1. The Curriculum

The International Baccalaureate® (short: IB) currently offers four programs for students aged 3 to 19:

- PYP: Primary Years Programme (ages 3 – 12)
- MYP: Middle Years Programme (ages 11 – 16)
- DP: Diploma Programme (ages 16 – 19)
- CP: Career-Related Programme (ages 16 – 19)

However, the initial program that was first offered in 1968 and from which all other programs eventually emerged was the Diploma Programme (DP). It took nearly thirty years until programs for lower age groups were developed; the MYP and PYP were both not offered until 1994 and 1997, respectively. In 2012, a new, more hands-on program was developed, the CP (formerly known as CC, Career-Related Certificate).

In this paper, I will mainly focus on the DP, as it is the most widely used program of the IB worldwide and also the most developed one, given that it was designed almost fifty years ago and has already undergone several adaptations. Another reason why I would like to narrow down my area of inquiry to the DP is because it is the final program students go through. If a student has gone through all three programs, then by the time he or she enters the DP, he or she will have been

² For more information see <https://ibdocs.ibo.org/research/> and the research section of the official IB website: <http://www.ibo.org/research/>.

through approximately twelve to sixteen years of IB education. Thus, students in the DP are most likely to be the ones that already show traits and have gained skills that an IB education aims to promote.

However, just as the IB emphasizes a holistic approach to education, I also believe it is important to not look at individual programs of the IB in isolation, but rather as a sixteen-year-long educational path that parents can choose for their children. Therefore, I will also take a closer look at the PYP and MYP, although not in the same depth as the DP. As the CP is still a relatively new model that differs from all the other IB programmes in a variety of ways and has only started to be offered as a stand-alone programme since 2016³, I will neglect it in this paper.

The following chart (Figure 3.1.) shows the three IB wheel models with a summary of the PYP, MYP, and DP:

³ Before 2016, every school that wanted to offer the CP had to be authorized for the DP (see Curriculum Review Report March 2015).

IB Wheel Models

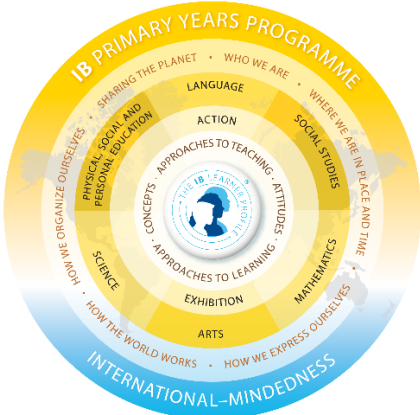
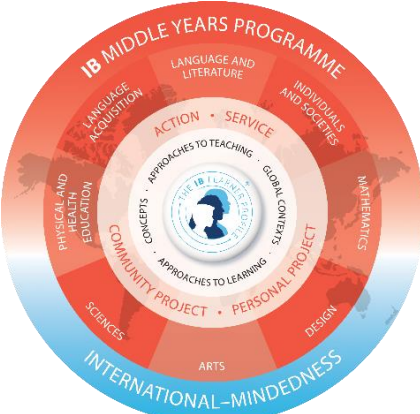
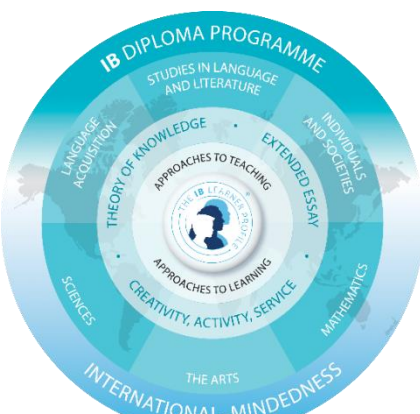
Model	Summary
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ages 3-12 • six subject areas • six transdisciplinary themes • exhibition project in final year • <u>essential elements</u>: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ knowledge (content) ○ concepts (powerful ideas) ○ skills (capabilities) ○ attitudes (dispositions) ○ action (demonstration of learning and responsibility)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ages 11-16 • eight subject groups • community project (year 3/4/5) • personal project (year 4/5) • concept-driven curriculum (key concepts, related concepts) • <u>global contexts</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ identities and relationships ○ orientation in space and time ○ personal and cultural expression ○ scientific and technical innovation ○ globalization and sustainability ○ fairness and development
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ages 16-19 • five subject groups & arts • 3-4 courses at higher level (HL) and the rest at standard level (SL) • <u>core subjects</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Extended Essay (EE) ○ Theory of Knowledge (TOK) ○ Creativity, Activity, Service (CAS) • possibility of taking self-taught courses and online courses

Figure 3.1. IB Wheel Models. A summary of all three wheel models (PYP, MYP, DP). (IBO 2017)).

Figure 3.1. above makes it evident that each of the IB programmes share similar values and are structured in similar ways. The most obvious similarity is the subject groups in which each of the programs is divided. All three programs contain languages, mathematics, arts, sciences, and a group that deals with social studies (*Social Studies* in the PYP, *Individuals and Societies* in the MYP and DP). Each program also contains an element that requires students to come up with some sort of project: *The Exhibition* in the PYP, the *Personal- and Community Project* in the MYP, and the *Extended Essay* and *CAS* in the DP. At the center of each program are the Approaches to Learning (ATLs) and Approaches to Teaching (ATTs). The ATLs describe all the skills that should be taught to the students, while the ATTs give guidance to teachers to clarify what kind of pedagogical principles should be employed at an IB World School (see e.g. IBO 2017g). Finally, and many educators familiar with the IB might argue that this is actually the most important of all aspects that make up an IB education, the IB puts a strong emphasis on promoting *International-Mindedness*. This means that students are taught within “global contexts”, an array of topics and ideas set out by the IB in their documents, (IBO 2013a: 6) in order to foster what has been referred to as “intercultural understanding and respect” in the IB mission (see IBO 2017a).

To summarize, what the PYP, MYP and DP all have in common is:

- the subjects into which the programs are divided (to a certain degree)
- project work
- an outline of *Approaches to Teaching and Learning* that needs to be followed
- Fostering *international-mindedness*

I have now outlined three (out of four) programs that the IB currently offers and pointed out the similarities between them. Obviously, as each of the three programs is designed for a different age group and thus slightly different target groups, there are also many differences that could have been pointed out. However, as in this paper I am limiting myself mainly to the DP with only a few connecting references to the MYP and PYP, I decided not to go into further detail on the individual characteristics of each of the programs. Instead, I will give a more detailed account of the DP, as it is the most relevant program for my thesis.

3.1.1. The Diploma Programme (DP)

The following section will go into more detail on the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (usually abbreviated *IBDP* or *DP*). First, I will discuss the IB in terms of its accessibility and current outreach. Secondly, a brief account of the subjects and the curriculum will be provided. Finally, I will delve deeper into the educational approach the IB takes, namely an inquiry-based curriculum that is in line with the *Understanding by Design*® framework.

The DP in numbers

As of March 2017, there are 3,101 schools that offer the DP across the globe (IBO 2017a). Almost 150,000 students attended the May 2016 examination session in 136 different countries. Out of all those candidates, approximately 80% reached the 24-point passing mark for the Diploma.

As already pointed out earlier, the IB is often perceived to be somewhat elitist and prestigious (see e.g. Ricks 2013). The main reason for this are the high school fees that most IB World Schools charge due to the expensive authorization process of the IB, as well as ongoing costs such as professional development for teachers and often higher teacher salaries due to the training and experience that is required for teaching an IB course. However, in May 2016, 51.8% of the schools who administered the exam were state schools; thus, approximately half of all IB schools were actually state-funded public schools. Accessibility has always been a prevalent problem for the IB and some measures have been taken already to close the gap between social classes and education (Abrioux & Rutherford 2013: 5).

Looking at the Financial Review 2014, the IB has continued to grow as the number of authorized schools has increased (IBO 2014a: 2). Thus, more and more students are taking IB exams.

Overall, it can be said that the IB has made some successful steps towards increasing its reputation and recognition, although accessibility is still an issue, especially in terms of catering for students of a lower socio-economic status.

Subjects in the DP

The IBDP's curriculum is divided into six subject groups:

1. Studies in language and literature
2. Language acquisition
3. Individuals and societies
4. Sciences
5. Mathematics
6. The arts

For each group, students can choose a variety of different courses. For instance, Groups 1 and 2 (studies in language and literature & language acquisition) are comprised of three different courses with different foci and proficiency levels. Group 3 on the other hand is comprised of ten different courses, giving students and schools a broad choice. I will not elaborate further which courses the IB offers, but you can find a complete list in the *IB Diploma Programme Brochure*⁴ (IBO 2017d).

A student opting for the IB Diploma will have to choose a total of six courses, one from each group. The only exception here is Group 6 (The arts) which is not obligatory; instead, students may choose another course from a different group if they wish to do so. These courses can be taken either at higher level (HL) or standard level (SL). In order to successfully complete the DP, three courses must be chosen at HL and the rest at SL (ibid; IBO 2017d; IBO 2016a: 13ff). It is also possible to choose four courses at HL; however, it is usually not required as per IB statement: "There may be an advantage for certain courses, but in the majority of cases three HL courses is sufficient for admission to first degree courses at university" (IBO 2017e). Those courses are graded on a seven-point scale; i.e. a candidate can obtain a maximum of 42 points ($6 \times 7 = 42$) for all of his or her six subjects. The maximum number of points that can be awarded in an IB Diploma is 45, as candidates also need to complete the *core* which accounts for three points ($42 + 3 = 45$).

⁴ See the *Digital Toolkit* section of the IB website: <http://ibo.org/digital-toolkit/brochures-flyers-and-posters/>.

In addition to the six subjects outlined above, DP students also need to complete the *core*, which consists of three courses:

- Theory of knowledge (TOK)
- Extended essay (EE)
- Creativity, activity, service (CAS)

(IBO 2016a: 14-16)

The core must be completed by every student in order to obtain an IB Diploma. While TOK is an actual course that students take with similar requirements to all the other six courses of the IBDP, the EE and CAS are project-based assignments. The EE is a “substantial piece of independent research of up to 4,000 words” which is normally supervised by a teacher at the school (ibid: 16). CAS is a rather unique project that is substantially different from all the other work students submit in the IB. It is divided into three elements that must be balanced: creativity, activity, and service. The main aim of CAS is for students to engage in and foster reflection, goal-setting, personal growth and challenges, collaboration, and to demonstrate an awareness of ethics throughout all their CAS experiences (ibid: 16; IBO 2015a: 10-12). In terms of final assessment, the grades for TOK and the EE will form a combined grade and contribute between zero and three points (out of a maximum of 45 and a passing mark of 24) to the final diploma. CAS, however, is not assessed at all; all criteria must have been met though, otherwise an IB Diploma will not be awarded (IBO 2016a: 14-15).

An Inquiry-Based Curriculum

The term *inquiry*, and more specifically, *inquiry-based teaching and learning* is mentioned in several IB documents (for e.g. see 2011a: 18; 2012a: 2f; 2013c: 10,12f; 2014b: 4; IBO 2014c: 7, 27). The official IB homepage also states that “[a]n IB education aims to transform students and schools as they learn, through dynamic *cycles of inquiry* [my emphasis], action and reflection” (IBO 2017f). The IB further states that its education philosophy “centres on learners” and that “[t]eachers enable and support students as they develop the approaches to learning they need – for both academic and personal success” (ibid). Two things become quite evident here: First, that the IB delivers a curriculum that is mainly based on inquiry, and second, that a curriculum that is student-centered and based

on independent inquiry is strongly connected to autonomy and thereby aims at fostering autonomous behavior.

This raises the question of what an inquiry-based curriculum is, and how the IB attempts to implement it. According to Hutchings (2006: 2) an inquiry-based curriculum entails:

- self-directed learning
- research that is done by students
- discovery learning
- making mistakes
- open-ended outcomes that allow many different answers to a question
- working with scenarios and examples
- students posing their own questions

To put all this into a chronological order, Hutchings (2006: 3) identified eight factors relevant for various inquiries:

- The selection of appropriate questions
- The formulation of appropriate questions
- The identification of key issues
- The search for valid and relevant evidence
- The interpretation, and assessment of evidence
- The application of evidence to identified issues
- The presentation of coherent conclusions, final or tentative
- The reflection on, and assessment of, the learning process

When considering inquiry-based learning as an approach, Blessinger and Carfora (2015:5) consider it to be “a cluster of teaching and learning strategies where students inquire into the nature of a problem(s) or question(s)”. kind of approach is typical for the *Understanding by Design*® framework, a framework that is often associated with an IB education (see e.g. Tilke 2011: 5). Blessinger and Carfora further highlight the empowering characteristics of inquiry-based learning, namely that it “allows the student to take greater ownership of her/his learning by allowing them a means by which to construct their own knowledge rather than just having

that knowledge merely spoon-fed to them by others” (Blessinger & Carfora 2015: 5).

Savery (2006: 16) provides a very straight-forward description of what an inquiry-based learning classroom can look like:

Inquiry-based learning activities begin with a question followed by investigating solutions, creating new knowledge as information is gathered and understood, discussing discoveries and experiences, and reflecting on new-found knowledge.

A typical *Understanding by Design*® (UbD) lesson plan reflects this kind of approach (for a sample lesson plan see appendix: 172) and several IB schools expect teachers to be familiar with UbD templates. For instance, *Zurich International School* (and several other schools across the globe) specifically refers to the UbD model in their recruitment brochure and also asks for “[e]xperience/familiarity with an inquiry-based pedagogy” (Zurich International School 2017). It therefore seems to be appropriate to dedicate a few lines of this paper to this approach.

3.2. Learners

International schools the world over differ greatly in terms of their student- and teacher body, teaching approaches, and school culture which is often shaped by the host country’s culture and government. What IB World Schools all have in common is that they share the same curriculum. Ideally, an Iranian student sitting in a TOK course at a Taiwanese school for two years will go through the same assessment procedures and policies and experience a similar syllabus to an Argentinian student taking a TOK class in the United States. However, while IB schools do share a lot of common features and ultimately pursue the same goal using the same summative assessment instruments, one thing that is always and will always be different are the learners: Where do they come from? What language(s) do they speak? What is their cultural background and socio-economic status? And finally, why are they even here, at an IB school, either in their home country, or in a place thousands of miles away from their home? This section attempts to provide precise answers to these questions in order to give readers new to the IB a general overview of what kind of students one can expect at an IB

World School. As concepts of education and autonomy are often regarded differently across cultures, I would like to shed some light on who IB learners are and provide some more information about their cultural background, as well as the way these children are often brought up. I will take a closer look at the personal challenges those students might have to face, but also point out the advantages they will benefit from by attending an IB school.

There are many words and names for IB World School students, some of them being rather derogatory. Mary Hayden (2006: 42) describes some of the more stereotypical types of students as “‘Global Nomads’, Third Culture Kids’ (TCKs), ‘Military Brats’, ‘Preacher Kids’ (PKs), and ‘Missionary Kids’ (MKs)”, depending on the reason why they decided to leave their country and sign up for an international education. However, one term that is generally more accepted is “the concept of the globally mobile child” (Hayden 2006: 41). It is a concept that refers to those children whose parents’ profession requires them to move from one country to another within a short period of time. Those children were born in one country, but attended schools in several other nations and generally do not have any clear roots as to what they could consider to be their home. (Eidse & Sichel 2004: 1). They are often kids who struggle with their identity because they have no clear answer to the questions about who they are and where they belong (Nette 2000: 25f).

However, at the same time, those children will also learn and try to adapt to their new environment. Pollock (1999: 92) coined the term “cultural chameleons” to describe such children who become good at adapting their language, appearance, and overall behavior to the given circumstances (ibid: 92). Another major and rather obvious advantage is that students who attend an international school are in the vast majority of cases at least bilingual, if not even multilingual (Hayden 2006: 64). As most international schools (and this includes IB World Schools) use English as the medium of instruction, most non-native English speaking children will aim at gaining fluency in this language (Hayden 2006: 61). It is also not surprising that most parents will seek an international school that uses English as its main language in order to ensure a smooth transition between schools and to open up doors of possibilities for their children’s tertiary education (ibid: 61).

While most people would probably argue that being bilingual or multilingual can only be an advantage, it should be noted that defining the terms *bilingual* and *multilingual*, especially in an everyday context, can be quite tricky (see Baker 2001: 2ff; Tokuhamma-Espinosa 2003: XIIIff). The problem is that many students may appear to be bilingual or multilingual, but often actually are not because they have not mastered the language on a level at which it would allow them to develop “abstractions and higher order thinking skills” (Kusuma-Powell 2004: 158) without any difficulty in that language. This is also referred to as “Functionally Multi-Lingual” by Kusuma-Powell (2004: 158). Another problem related to language skills that often occurs, especially if the child is put in an international school in its early years, is the development of the mother tongue (or L1). It may be the case that the child eventually feels more comfortable using the school’s language of instruction instead of his or her L1. Another problem may be that if the child spends a lot of time with speakers of the host country, it will prefer to use that language over time. This can be quite problematic in cases where the parents do not speak the language that is used at school and/or the language of the host country (Hayden 2006: 48).

To summarize, typical challenges that international students face are often related to a struggle of identity as well as possible problems in terms of language development and communication. However, this also constitutes an opportunity for globally mobile students to learn how to adapt to new circumstances and provides them with plenty of opportunities to acquire a new language and/or learn a language that might become extremely useful for their future (such as English, a language that opens many doors around the globe).

3.3. Teachers

Of pivotal importance to the success of any education scheme are teachers who, according to Hattie’s famous effect size studies, make up for approximately 30% of variance in students’ achievement (see e.g. Hattie 2003: 2).

In this section, I will outline who IB teachers are, where they come from, what their reasons for working at an international school are, and what kind of training they

normally go through. It should be noted though that a lot of the information provided in this section is anecdotal or based on either personal experience or information that can easily be found online as there are virtually no official publications available on this matter.

There are generally no rigid requirements from the IB in terms of what kind of teacher training is necessary to work at an IB school, as long as it “is a teacher who satisfies the school (and, if relevant, any national) requirements” (Abrioux & Rutherford 2013: 164). However, the IB does impose a strict policy on official IB training, i.e. training offered directly by the IBO. I will not elaborate on the details here, but it should be noted that a certain number of teachers and admin staff, depending on their role within the school, need to have attended specific IB-approved courses (see Abrioux & Rutherford 2013: 165ff). Thus, a lot of teachers who apply to work at established IB schools will most likely have completed at least some IB-approved professional development, on top of their teacher training. In most cases, this training has been paid for by their previous school. However, it is also possible to sign up for professional development courses offered by the IBO without yet being a member of an IB school.⁵

Apart from training, most renowned IB schools will require at least some full-time teaching experience at an international school and most IB schools will certainly favor applicants with IB experience. Since most of the official IB documents, such as subject guides, policies, procedures, and other useful information can only be accessed through the Online Curriculum Centre (OCC), a platform that is exclusively available for teachers working at an IB school, landing a job can actually be quite the challenge. The main dilemma is that most IB schools give preference to candidates who are familiar with the IB, but at the same time, it is almost impossible to learn about the IB without being hired by an IB school first. Thus, a lot of teachers who plan to pursue a career at an IB school, will most likely start out working at either an international school that is currently in the process of authorization, or a new school that just recently received its authorization.

⁵ For more information about IB professional development, consult the PD section of the official IBO website: <http://ibo.org/professional-development/>.

But who are those teachers and why would they go through such a tedious process instead of simply teaching at a school offering the national curriculum? The answer to the first question is a rather simple one. Since most international schools use English as the medium of instruction and due to the large number of schools following an American or British teaching culture and curriculum, it makes absolute sense that the vast majority of teachers come from the US, the UK, or other English-speaking countries. A lot of countries also have strict visa regulations, allowing only teachers with a passport from one of the five recognized English-speaking countries to obtain a work permit to become a teacher; those countries are: the US, the UK, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. Most countries also include Irish passport holders in this list, and some countries even include South African citizens. However, these regulations are subject to constant change and receiving clear, official, and updated information on this is almost impossible. Teachers coming from other countries will often be considered as well. However, the application for visa and work permit is often a more difficult process then⁶.

The lack of statistical data makes it difficult to construct an objective and accurate profile of international school teachers. However, Hardman (2001: 132-133) provides a useful categorization based on his research. They can be categorized as follows:

- childless career professionals;
- mavericks ('free and independent spirits');
- career professionals with families;

and among more senior members of the teaching staff:

- senior career professionals;
- senior mavericks;
- senior 'Penelopes' ('faithful to the country they had adopted')

(Hardman 2001: 132-3)

The list above also partly explains why teachers decide to go abroad, namely for the sake of going abroad and gaining new experiences. Other reasons often include:

- higher pay (Hayden 2006: 73),

⁶ See e.g. <https://www.internationalteflacademy.com/non-native-english-speakers> for more information on this issue.

- a more favorable climate (ibid: 75),
- a “prospect of a fresh start” (ibid: 75),
- better status and quality of life (ibid: 90),
- and a preference for the IB curriculum (Abrioux & Rutherford 2013: 501-503).

From my personal insights that I gained through talking and networking with IB teachers all over the world, it seems that one of the main reasons why teachers decide to go overseas to teach is the prospect of being able to travel on a teacher salary. Most international school teachers tend to stay at a school (and in a country) for not more than three years. Exceptions to this are often schools in highly attractive locations such as Geneva or Vienna, as Haden (2006: 89) claims:

International schools in locations such as Geneva and Vienna, for instance, are well known for having had many expatriate teaching staff whose stay has been far longer than the two to three years common to many other international schools worldwide (Hayden 2006: 89).

Considering all the facts that I have outlined above, it can therefore be assumed that a typical IB teacher profile consists of the following key features:

- highly trained with lots of IB-approved professional development
- experience in an international school environment (often at IB schools)
- a native English speaker holding a passport from an English native-speaking country
- an independent individual, usually rather young, with no dependents or other obligations
- a professional seeking for *more*, such as a higher status in society and better pay
- curious individuals who seek new opportunities, a change in lifestyle, and who want to learn about different cultures
- a professional who favors an IB education over other curricula, such as the national curriculum of the home country

An IB educator is therefore often an individual who seeks *more* and hopes for benefits that cannot be found in their home country. However, as already mentioned at the beginning of this section, hardly any data or research exists in

this area and most information on this is based on anecdotes and word of mouth. Thus, the information presented above should be read and considered with caution and rather be seen as a summary of many personal accounts and experiences of international educators worldwide.

3.4. Parents

Parents are a group that is often neglected in research within a school community. One of the main problems when doing empirical research in education is that it can be a very difficult and tedious process to involve all members of a school. Parents are no exception to this and collecting data from this vital group can be especially difficult at international schools which, in most cases, are private fee-paying schools, in which parents are not only members of the school community, but also clients, investors, sponsors, and initiators of reform within the school. It is therefore no surprise that the parent body will most likely consist of parents with a higher socio-economic status, as well as well-educated people who value education enough to be willing to spend large sums of money on it (Hayden 2006: 32f). In this section I will attempt to profile typical international school parents and their role at an international school and compare it to their role at a regular public school. Then, I will provide reasons as to why some parents choose an international school, or an IB World School. As empirical data for parents, just like for teachers, is scarce, a lot of the information provided in this section is anecdotal.

While there are many state schools offering the IB programme free of charge for parents, what most parents who opt for an IB education for their child will have in common is high evaluation of the importance of education. Any education program that is not mainstream will have a clientele that has at least considered various options and alternatives. Parents who finally make the decision to place their children in such a school are often also more involved in the school community. One typical reason for that is because an international school creates a safe bubble for many expats. It is a place where they can network and socialize with people that have similar challenges, interests, and cultural backgrounds. This is especially important for what Hayden (2006: 23) refers to as “*The Trailing Spouse*”. In most cases, families move because of a great opportunity that has come up for one of the parents. It is rarely the case that both partners initiated the move. Thus, there

will always be one person for whom the challenges and sacrifices accompanied with the move are greater than for the other (Storti 2001: 17-18; Hayden 2006: 23). In many cases, the trailing spouse might even start working at the school, given that he or she has the necessary qualifications. Another phenomenon quite popular at international schools are teaching couples who either apply for positions at the same school, or at different schools (Hayden 2006: 28).

For those parents who are not teachers or for whatever reason are not as involved in the school as others, they will be highly respected as customers of the school. As customers, it is only natural that parents will have certain expectations, usually setting the bar much higher than at state schools (see Hayden 2006: 31; Ellison & Davies 1993; Petch, 1986).

However, it is not just academic excellence that parents are after. Research shows that one of the main factors, if not *the* main factor, for deciding on an international school is actually the school's language of instruction. In a study by Mackenzie, Hayden, and Thompson (2001), many parents from IB schools stated that they chose the school because the language of instruction was English. It is a common belief of both native and non-native English speaking parents that receiving education in English will be extremely beneficial for their child's future (see study by Mackenzie, Hayden & Thompson 2001; Hayden 2006: 33ff). While English-medium instruction is the most important factor for parents for deciding for a school, the availability of the IB Diploma Programme was also ranked as extremely important and it is assumed that this is the case because parents often see it as a "guarantee of quality in the institution as a whole" (Mackenzie, Hayden & Thompson 2003: 305; Hayden 2006: 36). Parents also believe that an international school will foster their children's "cosmopolitanism" and will contribute to their "social and cultural capital to facilitate social mobility" (Resnik 2012: 250; Weenik 2008: 1091ff). So, it seems that parents aspiring an international career also choose international schools because they believe it will promote an environment that encourages a similar interest in their children. The IB appears to be the perfect choice for that, as one of its main pedagogical goals is to promote international-mindedness (see e.g. IBO n.d.b quoted in Hill & Saxton 2014: 42).

It is therefore evident that the parent body at international schools (including IB schools) is significantly different from that of a state school: They are globally mobile parents seeking educational opportunities for their globally mobile children. Parents frequently tend to be a lot more involved in the school community and culture, and they put great value on education; especially on education that uses English as a medium of instruction. Given that these parents come from rather affluent backgrounds, enabling them to send their children to fee-paying schools, they often also set much higher standards than the average parent at a state school would set. Due to the scarcity of empirical data in this field of inquiry, the information presented above should be taken with a grain of salt and more empirical research is needed in order to make more objective statements.

4. EMPIRICAL PART: LEARNER AUTONOMY

The following chapter describes the empirical data collection in my study. It is divided into two subsections: one for the teachers, another one for the students. The main goal of my study was to find out to what degree learner autonomy is fostered in IB World Schools and what kind of awareness students and teachers have of autonomous learning. It was initially planned to use a mixed-methods research approach, combining semi-structured interviews of teachers and students to collect qualitative data and to collect quantitative data using questionnaires. However, due to the nature of most IB schools being rather exclusive and therefore often secluded from the general public with high security measures taken by the school, this proved to be an unachievable task as it would have required access to a large sample size of IB students and teachers. Most schools were either not willing to cooperate or did not even let me discuss details about my research with the director. Thus, it was decided to collect qualitative data through interviews only. Another reason why I decided to opt for qualitative rather than quantitative data collection was because interviews turned out to be a lot more suitable for my topic as it requires a large amount of reflection for both the teachers and the students. I therefore found semi-structured interviews to be the clear superior choice over questionnaires because they allowed me to delve deeper into the issues and I could ask for further clarifications on the input I received during the interview.

Finding participants for my study in general turned out to be more difficult than originally anticipated. One very simple reason for this is that there are far fewer IB schools than public schools. Additionally, IB schools often operate in an international bubble, as already briefly mentioned in chapter 3 above. Many students have their own drivers or have their transportation home arranged by private busses organized by the school. This made it difficult to meet students outside of school. Similarly, teachers often have similar arrangements for transportation and as teachers do not wear uniforms, it is difficult to identify them in public.

I have divided the two subsections for teachers and students into further subsections: First, I will describe who the subjects of my study were. Then I will

describe the process of designing the instrument (i.e. an interview guide), followed by a brief description of the data collection itself. Finally, I will present the results of the study and provide a short analysis. A more detailed analysis in which I will link the results to the theory and apply it in a school context will be presented in the last chapter of this paper.

4.1. Teacher Interviews

The first subsection of this study will outline what I wanted to find out from the teachers who were interviewed, background information about those teachers, how they were interviewed, and the results of those interviews. A short analysis will be provided as well where necessary.

4.1.1. Aims of the Teacher Study

A very basic formulation of my research question for my teacher study would be: *How do teachers foster learner autonomy at IB schools that use English as the medium of instruction?* However, after the data collection process, I no longer feel that this question does full justice to the data gathered. Therefore, rather than identifying and formulating *one* research question, it seems to be more appropriate to speak of the plural, research *questions*. Formulating an array of questions is an approach commonly taken in qualitative research and advocated by several methodologists in various fields (see e.g. Mason 2002: 17; Davies & Hughes 2014: 169). Thus, I would like to identify several areas of inquiry that all relate to the research question formulated above.

There are two additional aspects that form layers over the entire teacher interview; thus, making them the heart of the interview. One of those layers is the general knowledge of learner autonomy and what teachers believe constitutes an autonomous learner. This area is one that I originally included as something I considered to be *background knowledge* on the concept. However, given the responses that were provided, I believe it could be seen as a separate area of inquiry that provides a lot of informative data for readers solely interested in that. The second layer is one that inevitably relates to all other questions, namely the language aspect of fostering autonomy. Given that the nature of a typical IB classroom at an international school is one that is multilingual and that according

to the IB “every teacher is a language teacher” (see e.g. IBO 2011a: 25; IBO n.d.a: 1-3; Davy 2011: 7), it becomes evident that language is a crucial feature, affecting the entire teacher interview.

Finally, **four research questions** were identified for the teacher study:

1. How do teachers self-report their ways of fostering learner autonomy in their classroom?
2. What kind of training, if any, have teachers received that enables them to foster autonomous behavior?
3. What are the teachers’ definitions of learner autonomy and what associations do they have with the concept?
4. To what extent is language an influencing factor when it comes to fostering learner autonomy?

4.1.2. Participants

Finding teachers to participate in my study turned out to be more difficult than originally expected. One clear reason for that is that there simply is an extremely limited number of IB teachers available. While the IBO is large organization with over 4,600 schools worldwide (IBO 2017a), compared to the number of ‘regular’ teachers, it is a tiny community, often not fully integrated in the host country’s culture and daily life. As an expat teacher, much of one’s personal life revolves around school and many international schools organize private social events for their staff. As IB schools in most countries do not have any explicit ties to the host country’s ministry of education or similar governmental departments (other than the initial accreditation process when opening the school), it was also not a viable option to contact governmental departments. This made it quite difficult to find participants. However, through various online platforms and by traveling abroad to places where IB education is more popular, I finally managed to interview four teachers who worked at IB schools at the time of the interview.

In order to protect the anonymity of my subjects, I will not provide any information regarding the school of the teachers nor the country in which the interview took place. However, I would like to note that all teachers who were interviewed were

trained teachers working at established international schools with at least one year of IB teaching experience. There is one exception to this and that is the pilot interview which was conducted with a teacher not working at an IB school. Nevertheless, the input I received from this interview was extremely valuable and interesting and I therefore decided to include it as well.

All teachers showed a typical teacher profile as described in section 3.3. *Teachers*: They are young professionals, have lived in different countries, and are aspiring to grow and further develop their international teaching career.

The following table provides an overview of all of the teachers that have been interviewed:

Question Teacher	sex	age	age group	subjects	experience at school	teaching experience	choice of profession
Pilot	f	36-46	9-10	Whole curriculum (British)	1 year	6-7 years	Wanted to travel and teach on the side and ended up falling in love with the job
T1	m	25-35	11-18	Psychology, math	4 years	6 years	Opportunity to travel and live abroad; have an impact on other people
T2	m	25-35	10-11	Whole curriculum (British)	2 years	4 years	Working in the UK as a teacher was horrible, so moved abroad
T3	f	25-35	12-17	EAL, independent study group	1 year	1 year	Wanted to teach English abroad
T4	f	36-45	11-18	EAL support, librarian	3 years	13 years	Wanted to teach secondary / older students

Figure 4.1. Teacher Overview. An overview of all teachers who participated in the study showing the most important information.

4.1.3. Designing the Instrument

An interview guide was designed and interviews were conducted following typical characteristics of a semi-structured interview: The interview guide contained a general structure with open-ended questions that were asked in a sequence. However, participants were allowed to occasionally drift off and add to their statements with little or no guidance from the interviewer. This was to build good rapport (Curtis, Murphy & Shields 2014: 115). The choice of using a semi-structured interview in favor of a structured interview was, as Flick (2009: 150) points out, to give teachers more freedom to elaborate on certain issues. At the same time, it gave me, as an interviewer, more opportunities to dig deeper into

those issues and ask for clarification or further elaboration. This freedom was useful on many occasions as one reoccurring feature of the interview guide was to ask the teachers for specific examples for practices he or she just mentioned. A structured interview did not seem to be appropriate in my case because I wanted my participants to actively engage in a conversation and provide lots of input about their teaching philosophy and pedagogical approaches. Given that a structured interview in most cases elicits very precise answers and does not allow for any flexibility on behalf of the interviewer, it did not seem to be a suitable format (Curtis, Murphy & Shields 2014: 115). At the same time, unstructured interviews did not seem to be economical as I narrowed down my areas of inquiry to fostering learner autonomy with a special emphasis on language issues that may arise in a multilingual and international classroom often found in IB schools. Thus, I wanted to give my participants some direction and narrow down the scope of their answers, which would have been difficult using an unstructured format (Curtis, Murphy & Shields 2014: 115).

Regarding the interview questions, a very clear emphasis has been put on the way teachers themselves believe they foster learner autonomy in their own classroom. Several questions in the interview guide are asking teachers to provide examples of fostering autonomous behavior, for instance by describing resources they use, or teaching practices they use. The latter is often described in relation to their training and history of professional development, which I would consider another area of inquiry.

In line with the recommendation by Curtis, Murphy, and Shields (2014: 118), the interview began with a few questions on the teacher's background, some information about the school they currently work at, as well as some personal questions regarding their training and their choice of becoming a teacher. I decided to include information about the training and choice of profession as well, as teachers who chose an international career are very likely to show different motivations and have different goals to 'regular' teachers (see section 3.3. *Teachers*), which may have an effect on their teaching philosophy and the way they view concepts such as *independence*, *freedom*, and *autonomy*. Finally, their approximate age and sex was noted down. I did not record any other personal information such as nationality, first language, or the name of the school as I

wanted to keep the data as anonymous as possible. Given that international school teachers often live in an international *bubble*, where they are usually not confined to influences of *one* specific culture, but rather confronted with an *array of different cultures and languages*, it seemed counterintuitive to focus on such aspects. However, due to the fact that most international schools tend to market their schools as Western, and often quite specifically, as providing an American or British education, all of my participants but one grew up and received their education in North America and the UK. All this background information was obtained orally using a digital voice recorder and then typed up after the interview.

The interview guide was divided into three sections:

1. School and teacher information

- a. Background information about the school the teacher is currently employed at
- b. Information about the participant's career as a teacher
- c. Personal information of the participant (age, gender)

2. Learner autonomy

- a. Self-formulated definitions of learner autonomy
- b. Participants' beliefs about learner characteristics of autonomous learners
- c. Ways of fostering learner autonomy in their own teaching
- d. Beliefs about factors impacting a learner's autonomy
- e. Reflections on the extent to which learner autonomy was emphasized in the participant's teacher training and further professional development
- f. The extent to which ICT may foster learner autonomy
- g. The extent to which freedom and choice may foster learner autonomy

3. Language

- a. Reflections on the commonly found statement that "every teacher is a language teacher" in the IB
- b. The role of using English as a medium of instruction
- c. The participant's students' (English) language proficiency
- d. *For non-English teachers*: Reflections on the extent to which they consider themselves to be language teachers

- e. Beliefs about the extent to which using English as a medium of instruction may constitute a barrier for fostering learner autonomy
- f. *If not answered before*: Resources participants use for scaffolding and differentiation

The list above is an overview of what information was collected during the interviews. The full interview guide with all the questions and other notes can be found in the appendix (6ff). All questions in the interview guide are based in the definitions outlined in chapter 2 (*Defining Learner Autonomy*) and the sub-sections in that chapter in which I elaborated on the importance of freedom, motivation, learner strategies, reflective learning, and lifelong learning. The final set of questions focuses on language aspects in the classroom, as one of my goals was to look at the link of fostering learner autonomy and using English as a medium of instruction. Questions about the use of ICT in the classroom were included as well, as most IB schools make extensive use of digital resources. As the vast majority of schools either provides laptops for their students or has a bring-your-own-device policy, a question on the use of technology in the classroom seemed crucial to me.

One somewhat unusual element that I incorporated in my interviews was a short one-page questionnaire on learner characteristics which was completed by the participants during the interview. The questionnaire consisted of ten statements where the respondents had to indicate their agreement on a four-point Likert scale (Strongly Agree / Agree / Disagree / Strongly Disagree). The participants were given a separate sheet of paper that looked like this:

Learner Characteristics

+

An autonomous learner is capable of...	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
determining realistic and reachable goals				
selecting appropriate methods and techniques to be used				
monitoring their own learning process				
evaluating the progress of their own learning				

Learner profiles: An autonomous learner is...	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
an active participant in the social processes of learning				
an active interpreter of new information in terms of what she/he already uniquely knows				
intrinsically motivated				
perceives him/herself in control of his/her own decision-making				
takes responsibility for the outcomes of his/her actions				
has confidence in him-/herself				

□

Figure 4.2. Learner Characteristics. Handout with learner characteristics that was given to teachers during the interview.

The statements above were taken from a summary of various definitions of autonomous learners compiled by Okumus (2015: 86) who in turn based her summary on definitions of well-known researchers in the field such as Holec (1979) Little (1991), Dam (1990), Deci and Ryan (1985), Bandura (1989), and Doyal and Gough (1991). The purpose of including those statements was to give some guidance to teachers who may not be familiar with the concept and also to focus the interview on my definition of learner autonomy in this study. Participants indicated their answers on the paper on their own and were then asked for their reasons for their choices. The questionnaire within the interview proved to be a valuable tool in all of the interviews as teachers used it as a point of reference in their answers. On the one hand, this may have led to certain biases in the interviewee's responses, however, at the same time it was an extremely useful addition to the interview as it gave teachers some guidance as to what kind of data I want to obtain during the interview.

The Pilot Study

Finally, I would like to briefly discuss the significance of the pilot study which consisted of only one interview with an international school teacher who was not employed at an IB school.

As the search for IB teachers who were willing to participate in the study proved to be much more difficult than originally expected, I decided to conduct my first interview with a teacher who also reached out to me, but did not fulfil all criteria (in this case: the teacher was not an IB teacher). It was a young, but experienced teacher, who was aware of the fact that the main purpose of the interview was to put the interview guide to the test for future participants. The teacher was informed that the data may or may not be used in the final study. Given the small amount of teacher interviews that were conducted in the end and the valuable input given in the pilot interview, I decided to also include this data in my research.

The participant in the pilot interview was also encouraged to voice her opinion on the interview and provided some useful suggestions. Some minor changes were made after the pilot interview, some including:

- Reformulating questions that needed adjustment
- Deleting questions that did not seem highly relevant
- Adding new questions that I felt were missing in order to properly collect all the needed data
- Dropping a second questionnaire that proved to be unnecessary
- Correction of minor mistakes in the interview guide

The pilot study proved to be extremely useful for all other interviews that followed and was a suitable tool for me to test my own abilities as an interviewer. Data obtained from the pilot study will always be explicitly referred to by using the terms *Pilot* or *Pilot teacher*.

4.1.4. Data Collection

The participants were mainly recruited through social media platforms or personal connections. All interviews were conducted either at a public place (such as a

coffee shop) or in an empty classroom at the participant's school. At first, the teachers were informed about the purpose and aims of my research in an informal conversation. Once the participant was informed about the procedure and did not have any further questions, a digital voice recorder was started and the teacher answered questions about their background and their school. Answers to these questions were recorded and no notes were taken. During this section, the teacher was not able to see any of the questions on the interview guide, nor any other information (such as the questionnaire). Once the background information was obtained, participants were informed that "now the actual interview begins", which indicated that the questions that followed will be based on the concept *learner autonomy*.

It was interesting to see that once the questionnaire was given to the participant, he or she glanced at it several times or referred to specific items on the questionnaire. It was therefore evident that the questionnaire formed a stable basis for the interviewees which made it easier to stay focused on the topic.

During the entire interview, no further input was given. This is a characteristic approach for semi-structured interviews, so as not to impact any of the respondent's replies (Edley & Litosseliti 2010: 158). On occasion, teachers asked follow-up questions or rhetorical questions during the interview to which my responses were limited to "What do *you* think it means?" or "What *could* it mean?" I also compiled a list of possible backchanneling options prior to the interview which I trained myself to stick to. Some of those options were nonverbal such as nodding, raising eyebrows and widening my eyes to indicate interest or amazement; others were verbal responses such as a short "aha" or "mhm", or typical phrases that indicated interest and focused attention (e.g. "I see", "I understand", "Oh wow", "That's interesting"). In addition, I also attempted to subtly indicate that the question was answered and that it was time to move on to the next question by either stopping to hold eye-contact and looking at my printed-out interview guide, or by using short subtle signal words such as "All right", "Good", or "Okay" with a lowering intonation as one would normally do at the end of a sentence.

Finally, at the end of the interview, I expressed my gratitude for their time, answered any questions they may have had after the interview and all teachers

were given either cash or coupons worth approximately EUR 20 – 30 (depending on local currency and current exchange rate) for their time. Each interview lasted approximately 45 – 60 minutes, including the informal conversations prior and after the recorded interview.

4.1.5. Results and Analysis

In this section I will report the results of the teacher interviews and summarize the key findings. The data will be presented in the order it was obtained and is mainly qualitative. For the sake of completeness, I have also quantified the data of the *Learner Characteristics* questionnaire that was handed out during the interview. A more thorough report and analysis of the qualitative data will be provided in the last section of this paper, *Fostering Learner Autonomy* (see section 5).

Definition of Learner Autonomy

The first question asked participants to provide a definition of learner autonomy. The following table (Figure 4.3.) provides a summary or an abridged version of those definitions. A table containing the full and unchanged quotes of each participant can be found in the appendix (60ff).

Interview	Definition
Pilot	<i>Learner autonomy means that learning doesn't stop after school, but that students continue to learn after school. It means that students have the motivation to continue to learn after school, at university, and throughout their entire life.</i>
1	<i>To me learner autonomy means that students are more self-directed, they are in charge of their learning, they are not just responding to explicit instructions given by their teacher, but they have the space to self-regulate and to make their own decisions with respect to their education.</i>
2	<i>[participant was not able to define 'learner autonomy', but decided to define a closely related concept, 'assessment-capable learner', instead] An assessment-capable learner is somebody who understands the learning journey that they are going to take. They understand the steps they are going to take, and as they are on this learning journey and they know where they are.</i>
3	<i>Learner autonomy refers to the learners' ability or freedom to do things his or her own way.</i>
4	<i>Learner autonomy is about how students make connections to their work and how well they understand it on their own without the guidance of the teacher.</i>

Figure 4.3. Teacher Definitions. A table displaying all definitions that teachers provided in the interviews. (for full unchanged version of quotes see appendix: 66).

Learner Profile of an Autonomous Learner

The second question of the teacher interview used the *Learner Characteristics* handout (see appendix: 8) to narrow down each teacher's definition of learner autonomy. The data of this short questionnaire was quantified and the results are shown in the table below (Figure 4.4.).

Statements	Interview				
	P	1	2	3	4
realistic and reachable goals	4	3	3	3	3
methods and techniques	4	3	3	3	3
monitor learning	4	3	4	3	4
evaluate progress	4	3	4	3	3
	3	4	3	3	3
actively involved social	3	4	4	3	3
new info prior knowledge	4	4	3	4	3
intrinsically motivated	3	4	3	3	4
control of decision-making	4	4	3	3	4
responsibility for actions	3	3	3	3	3
confidence in work	4	3	3	3	3
	4	3	3	3	3
SUM	36.0	35.0	33.0	31.0	33.0

Figure 4.4. Teacher Questionnaire Results. The quantified results of the questionnaire that was given to teachers.

The Likert scale statements have been coded as follows: *Strongly Agree* = 4; *Agree* = 3; *Disagree* = 2; *Strongly Disagree* = 1. The data shows that the teachers' definitions and beliefs about learner autonomy are all similar. None of the participants chose a negative option, thereby narrowing down the range to 1 and a low standard deviation for all participants.

Fostering Autonomy

When participants were asked how they foster autonomy, all four teachers highlighted two aspects: differentiation and providing choices. Participant two especially emphasized the IB learner profile and goal-setting in relation to differentiation and choice.

Participant 1 believes that “[f]ostering autonomy to the extent possible is always useful, but [...] [t]here is a set curriculum to follow” (appendix: 24). This teacher fosters autonomy by less structured classroom activities, such as class discussions

instead of letting students answer specific questions (appendix: 25). He points out that in class discussions or in essay-based IB exams, students have more freedom to choose how and what to answer, thereby also allowing the teacher to design lessons around students' interests (appendix: 26). In terms of resources, he uses goal-setting and reflection worksheets, as well as reflection journals in which students can make "connections between personal experiences and the course" (appendix: 25).

Participant 2 puts a lot of emphasis on goal-setting as well. The school he teaches at goes through great lengths to enforce the IB learner profile and make students set their own targets and reflect on their learning. This is done through keeping a learning portfolio that is presented at the parent conference (appendix: 36) and through discussions:

So every end of the lesson, or end of the day or end of the unit, we would have that discussion with the children. 'When were you a risk-taker' this week?', or 'When were you a communicator?', or 'How are you self-reflective?', things like that. And that starts all the way from key stage one until they leave.
(appendix: 35)

Participant 3 mentions a successful example where she would ask students to bring in texts that relate to their own culture or that they particularly like in order to cater for her students' individual interests and motivate them for class (appendix: 46ff). However, she does point out regularly throughout the interview that giving younger students too much freedom can be counterproductive and that the provision of many choices should be used with caution (appendix: 47, 50).

For participant 4, one vital aspect of fostering autonomy is to make students aware of their own learning style so they can find out what method for revising and memorizing content works best for them. This is realized through administering personality tests and comparing them to the IB learner profile (appendix: 55). As a support teacher, she also focuses on different ways of assessment in order to make sure every student feels included. One example that was mentioned for this was to allow students to prepare a Powerpoint presentation instead of writing an essay: "students had to write a five-paragraph essay on a certain culture in I&S. And one student, he made a Powerpoint [...]. He presented the same information, but just in a different format" (appendix: 56).

When asked about in how far their teacher training prepared them to foster autonomy in their classroom, all of the teachers state that it was either not covered at all or to a very small extent (appendix: 17, 27, 38, 48f, 57). Participant 4 claims that while it was not covered to a large extent in her regular teacher training, she did complete a two-year program on inclusive education in which she was taught how to differentiate in order ensure that all students “reach the curriculum goal without changing it too much, but giving them ownership” (appendix: 56).

ICT and Learner Autonomy

All four participants advocate the use of technology in the classroom to foster autonomy and also provide examples of why and how they use technology. Participant 1 and 2 both use technology as a blended learning tool (appendix: 28, 38f) Participant 2 especially likes to use online blogs to provide students and parents with a platform to carry on class discussions at home (appendix: 38f). The benefits of using the internet as a resource and research tool is highlighted by participants 1 and 3, who both believe that the internet can be a significant contributing factor to the students’ learning (appendix: 27, 38f). Participant 4 explained how she incorporated a flipped classroom in her teaching as a way to differentiate among three grade levels she had to teach in one room. The fact that all students had their individual laptops and access to the internet made teaching students of varying levels much easier for her (appendix: 57).

None of the participants mentioned any significant disadvantages of using ICT. Only participant 3 pointed out that especially younger students may tend to simply copy information they see online without any real learning taking place (appendix: 48). However, this may be more of an issue in terms of maturity and finding the right task for the learner’s level of autonomy, rather than an issue related to ICT itself. Especially the school of participant 2 seems to have a very well-established ICT curriculum at the school that is also taught by ICT specialists. This may help students become more autonomous in their learning as the learn how to use technology more efficiently for learning at school and at home.

Language

The final part of the interview consisted of questions related to the use of English as a medium of instruction at their school and in how far this affects their students' learning. The aim of this part of the interview was to find out to what extent participants believe that the IB's statement that "every teacher is a language teacher" holds true at IB schools and in how far teachers believe that using English as a medium of instruction affects a learner's degree of autonomy in their learning.

The answers to these two questions have been summarized in the table below (Figure 4.5.). The full unchanged answers can be found in the appendix at the end of each interview (see appendix: 21-59).

Interview	Does the statement "every teacher is a language teacher" hold true?	English-medium teaching as influence on autonomy in learning
1	<i>Yes because every subject contains subject-specific vocabulary that needs to be taught to both native speakers and non-native speakers of English. This also forces me adapt my language accordingly.</i>	<i>Students with a lower English proficiency level probably find it more difficult to do independent research. Most IB exams are essay-based, thus being able to express oneself effectively in English is vital and may be more difficult for students who struggle with the language.</i>
2	<i>It depends on the school.</i>	<i>Students often know how to do things, but they sometimes struggle to understand the instructions. Non-native English speakers may be used to a different essay writing style which interferes with their writing skills in English. Reflecting on learning and teaching kids how to be autonomous all happens in English. This is obviously more difficult if your first language isn't English.</i>
3	<i>Teachers at IB schools are definitely better at catering for EAL needs than at other schools; especially teachers who teach the humanities.</i>	<i>My student's language proficiency is okay for now, but once they move to DP it won't be. They need a lot of support and must be intrinsically motivated in order to move on.</i>
4	<i>It is very true because we have a lot of students whose first language is not English. Teachers therefore have no choice but to become a language teacher.</i>	<i>If my students' level of English was higher, I would be able to do a lot more higher level tasks. It is also very difficult to explain students what an autonomous learner is and why this is a useful goal to have. It is a very abstract concept that is hard to explain to EAL learners.</i>

Figure 4.5. Teacher Responses on Language Aspects. An overview of teacher responses on language related questions asked in the teacher interview.

All teachers point out that a lower English language proficiency does have an effect on the degree of a learner's autonomy. Additionally, participants 2 and 4 also considered the fact that even explaining the concept 'learner autonomy' and introducing students to all the steps that this path entails is a challenging task if students lack the essential vocabulary for this. Participant 1 also mentions that language may constitute a barrier for doing independent research and in final assessments. This is especially true for essay writing, as also participant 2 points out (appendix: 40f).

4.2. Student Interviews

The second subsection of this study will outline who the students were that have been interviewed, what they were interviewed on, how they were interviewed, and what the results of those interviews were. A short analysis will be provided as well where necessary.

4.2.1. Aims of the Student Study

Similar to the teacher study, the student study aimed at collecting data answering not one single research question, but rather a set of various areas of inquiry. While quite a number of the questions in the teacher interview aimed at eliciting prior knowledge of the concept of learner autonomy, this was not the case at all in the student interviews. Most questions that were asked in the student interview were reflective. Students were asked to think about themselves, the IB, and their teacher – all in relation to learner autonomy.

The first set of questions asked students to think about the concept learner autonomy and what it means, followed by an in-depth analysis in which student self-reported their degree of autonomy. The aim was to find out to what extent students at IB schools consider themselves to be autonomous learners.

The second set of questions dealt with the IB itself, more specifically, with the IB learner profiles. Students were supposed to judge and then provide reasons which of the ten attributes of the IB learner profiles are representative of promoting learner autonomy. The aim here was to find out to what extent students consider

the IB to be a program that fosters learner autonomy and which part of the program (i.e. which learner profile attributes) are key here.

The third set consisted of questions about the student's teachers. Students evaluated to what degree their teachers are eager to promote qualities often found in autonomous learners and if they do promote these qualities, how they are doing it. The main aim of this set of questions was to find out what kind of resources or approaches IB teachers use in order to foster autonomous behavior. But it was also supposed to identify the extent students are aware of the fact that this is something that happens (or is supposed to happen) in an IB classroom.

As the theoretical part of this study has shown, differentiation and freedom are crucial components when it comes to fostering autonomy. Thus, I wanted to find out to what extent students feel that teachers differentiate in their classroom and to what extent students feel that teachers should provide choices for their students. In-between those two areas of inquiry, students were also asked about the use of ICT in the classroom. It can be argued that this is an area connected to both differentiation and freedom as the use of ICT can be a suitable means of differentiating in a classroom and may provide opportunities for independent inquiry. For instance, a classroom in which all students are able to work on their own device allows the teacher to give tasks that are tailored to individual students, as there is not just one board from which the students need to take their resources, but rather several individual sources students can choose from and work on independently. Additionally, students were asked to what extent access to ICT enables them to become more autonomous.

Finally, as in the teacher interview, students were asked to answer questions about the role of language in the classroom, more specifically the role of English as a medium of instruction at their school. These questions were supposed to help identify possible challenges for less proficient English language speakers in the classroom and how teachers cope with these challenges.

To summarize, **six research questions** can be identified for the student study:

1. To what extent do IB students identify themselves to be autonomous learners?
2. To what extent do students consider the IB learner profiles to be consistent with characteristics of autonomous learners?
3. To what extent do students believe that their teachers foster autonomous learners in their classroom?
4. To what extent do students report that their teachers
 - a. differentiate in their classroom?
 - b. should provide choices for their students?
 - c. use ICT in their classroom?
5. To what extent do students believe that access to ICT enables them to be autonomous?
6. What kind of additional help, if any, do students report their teachers provide for less proficient English speaking students at their school?

4.2.2. Participants

Due to the fact that the vast majority of international schools have uniforms for students, it was rather unproblematic to recruit volunteers to participate in my study. Most students were recruited at shopping malls, coffee shops, public school events, or similar public places by simply approaching them and asking them if they would be interested in participating in a study about learner autonomy in the International Baccalaureate.

Many students showed immediate interest and were willing to participate. Additionally, two students who recently graduated from an IB school were interviewed, resulting in a total of eleven student interviews from various schools, countries, and cultural backgrounds. To ensure anonymity for those students, no personal information other than their age, grade, and gender will be provided in this paper. However, most students had highly diverse backgrounds and had lived in several countries. Due to the fact that interviewees attended fee-paying schools in the mid- to upper-range, it can also be assumed that all students came from affluent backgrounds.

In order to guarantee a certain level of awareness of the IB and maturity, only students currently enrolled in the Diploma Programme pursuing a diploma and two recent graduates were interviewed. This was also to ensure a certain level of English language proficiency. Students in the Middle Years Programme often lack the language skills, especially if they are new to the programme and do not plan on pursuing the IB Diploma, but the IB Certificate instead. As students who opt for the IB Certificate often do so due to lack of language skills, these students were excluded from my sample.

The following table provides an overview of all students that were interviewed:

Question Student	sex	age	DP year	years at school	favorite subject	Least favorite subject	Satisfaction with school
S1	m	17	2	3	English, biology	none	Yes, everyone is friendly and collaborative
S2	m	17	2	4	history, physics	chemistry	Yes, good learning environment; supportive
S3	m	17	1	2	Business, theater	math	Neither happy nor disappointed
S4	m	18	1	2	history	German, math	Yes, small school; good teachers
S5	m	18	2	3	history, geography	math	Yes, environment is very social, egalitarian, and friendly; approachable teachers
S6	m	17	1	1.5	economics, history	English	Yes, especially the service-learning aspect
S7	f	17	2	2	English, economics	French	Yes, school prepares very well for IB exams
S8	f	19	alumni	9	biology	history	Yes
S9	f	19	alumni	13	biology	chemistry	Yes for final DP years; school did not pay much attention to teachers' qualifications in grade 9,10
S10	f	16	1	3	psychology	TOK	Yes, but it was hard to adjust to social life at the beginning
S11	f	17	1	14	Psychology, biology	Thai, CAS	Yes, very

Figure 4.6. Student overview. Overview of all students who were interviewed with most important background information.

4.2.3. Designing the Instrument

A very similar interview guide to the one compiled for the teachers was created for the students. It follows typical features of a semi-structured interview, is divided into several sections, and contains a short questionnaire with slightly changed statements and a slightly different format. Additionally, a sheet with a list of IB learner profile attributes taken from the introduction part of an official IB document called “What is an IB education?” has been used as a supplementary resource (see IBO 2013a: v; or see appendix: 170). This list appears in several IB documents

and course books that have been designed for the IB and most students should therefore be familiar with it already (e.g. IBO 2014b: vi; IBO 2015a: vi).

Just like the teacher interview, the student interview starts out by asking the student questions about themselves and their school. In order to make sure that the student is indeed currently in the DP and that they are old enough to participate (i.e. at least 16), the first question asks the student about his or her age. This is followed by several questions about the school, such as the size of the school, facilities and resources that are available, and any kind of academic programs the school may offer in addition to the IB. The students also provide details about the subjects they are taking and which one of those subjects is their favorite or least favorite one and why. This data was crucial for the rest of the interview, as it allowed me as an interviewer to refer to the subject they like best or they are good at, as well as subjects they do not appreciate as much. It also gave me a better idea about their personality and their relationship with their teachers, as I always inquired whether it is the teacher who makes the subject likable or nonlikable or if there are any other factors that need to be taken into consideration during the interview. Finally, students were asked about their general satisfaction with their school in order to evaluate in how far certain responses in the course of the interview may be biased or in any way affected by personal reasoning rather than rational reasoning.

The interview guide can be divided into four subsections:

1. Learner autonomy

- a. The student's understanding and/or definition of the concept
- b. A questionnaire in which students indicate and reflect on their self-perceived degree of being an autonomous learner

2. IB Learner Profiles

- a. Which (if any) of the IB learner profiles are representative of learner autonomy

3. If and how their teachers

- a. Promote qualities typical for autonomous learners
- b. Differentiate among their students in their classroom
- c. Use ICT to promote learner autonomy and to what extent this is important

- d. Provide various choices of tasks for learning and to what extent this is important

4. Language

- a. The role of English as a medium of instruction on their learning
- b. The extent to which subject teachers pay attention to language-related aspects in their teaching
- c. Resources teachers may use to help students who are less proficient in English

The list above provides an overview of what information was collected during the interviews. The full interview guide with all the questions and other notes can be found in the appendix (63ff).

Similar to the teacher interviews, a one-page questionnaire was used (see Figure 4.7. below):

Statements

I can...	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
determine realistic and reachable goals for school				
select appropriate methods and techniques to study and complete work effectively				
monitor my own learning				
evaluate the progress of my own learning				
I...	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
get actively involved in social aspects of learning (e.g. group or pair work, discussions, collaborating/working together)				
interpret new information in a way that activates my prior knowledge of the subject				
am intrinsically motivated				
am in control of my own decision-making				
take responsibility for the outcomes of my actions				
have confidence in myself when it comes to my school work				

Figure 4.7. Student Questionnaire. Statements to which students were asked to indicate their agreement.

It was a slightly modified version of the one used for teachers, but some of the statements have been changed in order to make the questionnaire more accessible for students. For instance, statements 2, 5, and 10 have been extended in order to make it clearer to the student what is meant. Statement 6 has been slightly rephrased from “what she/he already uniquely knows” to “in a way that activates my prior knowledge of the subject” as this is a phrase that is more commonly used by teachers in the classroom. Another modification that has been made was that students were not asked to judge whether the statements are in line with typical characteristics of autonomous learners, but instead evaluated in how far these statements are true for themselves. This adjustment was made for two reasons: First, it makes the statements more personal and thereby also less random and arbitrary, and second, it shows to what extent IB students actually consider themselves to be autonomous learners. Since the overall aim of my study is to find out about the degree of students’ autonomy, this small modification seemed more suitable for the student interview.

The questions about the IB learner profiles also seemed more appropriate in the student interview, as they are directly addressing the student. Additionally, it gave me a better idea about the students’ awareness and knowledge of the learner profiles.

Both the questionnaire and the IB learner profiles handout proved to be a valuable addition to the interview, as it allowed me to delve deeper into certain issues and was also a suitable resource in order to help students answer the questions that followed afterwards.

4.2.4. Data Collection

Unlike the teacher interviews, most student interviews happened unplanned and spontaneous without prior contact to the participants. Most students were recruited at shopping malls and coffee shops in close vicinity to the school and in most cases interviews took place immediately. As most international schools use uniforms and also use different designs for their DP students’ uniforms, identifying my target group in public was extremely easy.

Before the interview, students were informed about all procedures and could ask questions. In most cases, longer informal conversations arose before the actual interview started and a similar informal conversation continued afterwards. The fact that the interviews also took place at coffee shops contributed to the informality of the setting.

It was very fortunate that most students showed a genuine interest in the research and it should be noted that all students took the interview very seriously and answered all questions to their best knowledge and often in great detail.

The way the student interviews were conducted is identical to the teacher interviews: The voice recorded was started when the background information was gathered. No notes were taken at any time and there was no additional input given by me. The questionnaire and the IB learner profiles were both referred to by many students during the interview which made it easier for the students to understand the concept and at the same time helped make the interview more focused on the central topic.

Finally, at the end of the interview, I expressed my gratitude for their time, answered any questions they may have had after the interview, and all students were given either cash or coupons worth approximately EUR 10 – 20 (depending on local currency and current exchange rate, as well as the length of the interview) for their time. Each interview lasted approximately 30 – 45 minutes, including the informal conversations prior and after the recorded interview.

4.2.5. Results and Analysis

In this section I will report the results of the student interviews and summarize the key findings. The data will be presented in the order it was obtained and is mainly qualitative. For the sake of completeness, I have also quantified the data of the *Learner Characteristics* questionnaire that was handed out during the interview and the data collected in the *Learner Profiles* section. A more thorough report and analysis of the qualitative data will be provided in the last section of this paper, *Fostering Learner Autonomy* (see section 5).

Definition of Learner Autonomy

The first question asked participants to provide a their own interpretation of the term learner autonomy or any of its related concepts ('self-directed learning', 'independent learning', 'self-regulation'). The following table (Figure 4.8.) provides a summary or an abridged version of those definitions. A table containing the full and unchanged quotes of each participant can be found in the appendix (167-169).

Interview	Definition
1	<i>Learner autonomy describes any learning where the student is in control of the planning and execution of all actions related to learning. The student will show learner characteristics such as self-control, coherency, self-sustainment, high concentration, and self-criticism.</i>
2	<i>Self-directed learning is about teaching the student to fish, rather than giving the fish to the student. The student aims to gain a deeper understanding of the contents provided in class and develops his or her learning skills by getting actively involved and through independent work.</i>
3	<i>Learner autonomy is a kind of structure that describes how learning can take place in different ways.</i>
4	<i>Learning independently is self-study. The student teaches him-/herself the content and has to supervise his or her own learning him-/herself.</i>
5	<i>Learner autonomy is when an institution gives its students the opportunity to self-study. The pupil decides what he or she wants to learn and what methods he or she wants to use for learning.</i>
6	<i>Learner autonomy describes the ability to choose one's own learning pace and the order in which content is learned. An autonomous learner will be allowed to decide how time should be spent on learning certain contents.</i>
7	<i>Self-directed learning is when the teacher guides the student through the learning. The teacher provides additional resources in the classroom so the learner can decide independently what he or she wants to learn today.</i>
8	<i>Independent learning is when the student receives some direction, but he or she has to understand what and how to learn within this framework.</i>
9	<i>Autonomy is related to motivation and skills.</i>
10	<i>Learner autonomy is when the student finds out content by him-/herself (e.g. by obtaining information independently from a textbook).</i>
11	<i>Learner autonomy means that the student has to be self-sufficient in his or her own work, either at home or during free times at school.</i>

Figure 4.8. Student Definitions. A list of students' definitions of learner autonomy. (for full unchanged version of quotes see appendix: 167-168).

What is interesting about the definitions above is that they are all unique and different from one another. All participants, except for interview 3 and 9, provided a fairly detailed and accurate account of the concept. All definitions show some elements that can also be found on the Learner Characteristics handout (see appendix: 55) which was based on the definition provided by Okumus (2015: 86).

Self-Assessment Tool

The second question of the student interview used the *Learner Characteristics* handout (see appendix: 55) as a reflection and self-assessment tool. The data of this short questionnaire was quantified and the results are shown in the table below (Figure 4.9.).

Statements	Interview										
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
realistic and reachable goals	3	3	4	3	4	4	3	3	2.5	3	3
methods and techniques	2	3	2	3	4	3	3	3	3	3	3
monitor learning	3	3	2	3	2	4	4	3	2.5	3	3
evaluate progress	2	4	3	3	3	3	4	2	3	3	3
actively involved social	4	3	1	4	3	4	4	3	3	3	3
new info prior knowledge	3	4	3	4	4	4	3	2	3	3	3
intrinsically motivated	3	4	3	3	4	3	2	3	2.5	3	2
control of decision-making	3	4	2	3	4	3	3	3	3	3	3
responsibility for actions	4	4	4	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	3
confidence in work	3	4	3	3	4	4	3	3	3.5	3	2
SUM	30	36	27	32	36	36	33	29	30	31	28

Figure 4.9. Student Questionnaire Results. Quantified results of questionnaire that was given to students in interviews.

The Likert scale statements have been coded as followed: *Strongly Agree* = 4; *Agree* = 3; *Disagree* = 2; *Strongly Disagree* = 1. In interview 9, the participant was not willing to decide between two options and ticked both options for three items. Thus, those three items are fractional numbers while the rest are whole values.

Based on the sum of the items, it can be said that participants 2, 5, and 6 self-reported a high correlation with their own learning characteristics to those provided on the *Learner Characteristics* handout (see appendix: 55). Participants 3, 8, and 11 self-reported the lowest correlation and therefore consider themselves to be less autonomous in their learning than the other participants. It can be assumed that participant 3 in general fails to understand the concept itself as this student's definition of learner autonomy was also a very vague one (see Figure 4.8. above). This can at least partly be attributed to the student's low level of English, as evidenced in the interview transcript (see appendix: 88-96). Participant 8 mentions

that she has difficulties evaluating her own learning and that she always relies on her teacher's judgement when it comes to her learning progress: "I always have to ask the teacher where they think I am" (appendix: 136). She also claims that it is difficult for her to connect new information to prior knowledge and that instead she just "kind of learn[s] everything all over again" (appendix: 137). Participant 11 believes she is not intrinsically motivated. She states that she needs her peers for support to push her to do her work because she likes to procrastinate (appendix: 159f). Another problematic aspect for her is that she often feels her notes are not sufficient and therefore lacks confidence in her work (appendix: 160).

Learner Profiles

The participants were then asked to pair the concept *learner autonomy* with the ten IB learner profile attributes. Most participants simply looked at the attributes and the learner characteristics and then started talking. These monologues were analyzed and the naming of attributes that participants considered to be representative or not representative of learner autonomy was counted. Figure 4.10. below shows the result of his analysis.

<u>REPRESENTATIVE</u>													
IB LEARNER PROFILE		Interview											
ATTRIBUTES		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	SUM
inquirer		+	+			+	+		+	+		+	7
knowledgeable		+			+	+			+	+	+		6
thinkers		+	+		+	+			+	+	+		7
communicators				+	+			+	+	+			5
principled					+		+		+	+		+	5
open-minded				+	+	+	+						4
caring													0
risk-takers			+	+						+			3
balanced		+		+			+	+		+		+	6
reflective		+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	11
<u>NOT REPRESENTATIVE</u>													
IB LEARNER PROFILE		Interview											
ATTRIBUTES		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	SUM
inquirer													0
knowledgeable			+				+					+	3
thinkers							+						1
communicators			+			+	+				+	+	5
principled						+							1
open-minded										+		+	2
caring			+	+	+	+		+	+	+	+		8
risk-takers					+	+	+		+				4
balanced			+		+	+							3
reflective													0

Figure 4.10. Representative Learner Profiles. Overview of results.

One noteworthy finding is that all participants considered *reflective* to be an attribute that is representative of learner autonomy while none of the participants considered *caring* to be a representative attribute. *Inquirer* was also considered to be representative of learner autonomy by 7 participants, but none of the participants considered it to be not representative. *Communicators* was an attribute that was often talked about at great length and approximately half of the participants linked it with learner autonomy while the rest did not. One reason why this specific attribute lead to a lot of discussion was because one of the items on the *Learner Characteristics* handout was “get actively involved in social aspects of learning (e.g. group or pair work, discussions, collaborating/working together)”. It can be assumed that had this item not been on the handout, fewer participants would have linked *communicators* to learner autonomy. In that sense, the handout most likely lead to some biases that should be avoided if this interview was ever

conducted again. Participant 2 pointed out that it is not so much the communication aspect that is important, but rather “the support of others” (appendix: 82). Participant 6 thinks that *communicators* can be an important aspect for an autonomous learner, but it does not necessarily have to be for everyone (appendix: 119). Participants 10 and 11 both seemed unsure of what *communicators* or *communicating* exactly entails and thus rejected the attribute as communication is a part of anyone’s life and linking it to any concept is not necessary (appendix: 152 & 161).

Teachers

Ten out of eleven participants could think of at least one teacher who is particularly eager to promote these qualities in his or her students. Only participant 4 felt that his teachers “are quite weak in some stages” (appendix: 101). He pointed out that his teachers often “struggle with keeping the students motivated” and that “a lot of them [teachers] just say they’re doing their job and they’re not willing to expand that more than that limit” (appendix: 101). All other students were able to provide several examples of how their teachers promote learner autonomy and more about these findings will be presented in the final part of this paper, *Fostering Learner Autonomy*.

Differentiation

This was probably the most difficult question for students to answer. Most students failed to provide concrete examples of how their teachers differentiate. Participant 10 stated that there is some differentiation in the classroom, but to a very low extent. According to her, the main reason for that is that the DP students at her school are a very homogeneous group so that there is hardly any differentiation needed. She specifically mentions the MYP in this context and how it lacks to prepare students for the DP (appendix: 154). This is a vital aspect here as before the interview, when the background information was collected from every student, participant 10 stated that it was difficult for her at the beginning to adjust and find new friends because most students have attended the school for years (appendix: 150). However, all other students were able to provide several examples of

differentiation in the classroom. The following list are quotes of some of the interviews when asked about differentiation:

- “the teacher simply gives us different works” (Interview 2)
- “they give us the choice to learn in many cases” (Interview 2)
- “we are divided in two [ability] groups” (Interview 3)
- “he explains individually to a person” (Interview 3)
- “whenever I had a question I went to my teachers I got resources, different resources and answers on what should I do and what’s better for me to do” (Interview 4)
- “and that can be done through methods of changing teaching style, by changing the method through which independent learning is done or by simply suggesting different styles of learning to people” (Interview 5)
- “high-achieving and low-achieving students work together and we have a lot of very mixed tables and groups” (Interview 7)
- “She [the teacher] will get you into groups of people to come up and she will say, ‘Oh if you don’t understand this, just stay back and I will come to you in a minute and will explain it so you understand it’” (Interview 8)

ICT

The use of technology in the IB was an extremely interesting question and the students’ opinions differ greatly on this topic. Participants 1, 2, 5, 7, and 8 all agreed that ICT in the classroom and especially for research purposes is extremely important for autonomous learning. All these participants use their computers inside and outside of class regularly and believe that not having access to the internet or a computer would significantly lower their degree of autonomy. Participants 4, 9, and 11 all agreed that the use of ICT would have either no effect at all or very little effect on their autonomy. Participants 3, 6, and 10 had a very neutral perspective on that matter. In the interviews, they pointed out both advantages and disadvantages of ICT for their learning. These participants considered it to be a very personal issue, claiming that some people simply prefer using computers while others do not.

Freedom

Similar to the ICT question, participants also had split views when it comes to the amount of freedom they are given by their teachers. Participants 2, 3, 4, 6, and 11 all believe that being provided with an array of choices can be extremely advantageous and some students even considered it to be a necessary prerequisite for autonomous learning. For instance, participant 2 pointed out that being provided a variety of choices “does provide different ways of knowing for each individual and each individual has different methods for self-directed learning”. Thus, he believes “it’s quite crucial” (appendix: 85). Participants 1, 5, 8, 9, and 10 believe there are many advantages and disadvantages to this and that it is important that the teacher finds the right balance when providing choices. Participant 7 highlights the fact that freedom also comes with responsibility and that not all students may be able to handle it. She believes that “when given an option, a lot of students, especially those who struggle, will choose the easiest one” (appendix: 131).

Language

The final part of the interview consisted of three questions related to language aspects of their learning and the importance that is placed on language at their school. The first two questions dealt with

- 1.) whether being taught in English has an influence on their learning and
- 2.) the extent to which their subject teachers (i.e. non-language teachers) pay attention to language aspects.

The answers to these two questions are very complex. The table below (Figure 4.11.) provides a summary or abridged version of the participants’ answers. The full unchanged answers can be found in the appendix at the end of each interview (see appendix: 68-166).

Interview	English-medium teaching as influence on learning	Extent subject teachers pay attention to language aspects
1	<i>Being taught in English is now actually easier than in my native language. However, this was very different three years ago.</i>	<i>Teachers often try to rephrase or use more simple words.</i>
2	<i>I wasn't taught much in my native language. I consider myself to be more of a native English speaker. Being taught in my native language would probably be more difficult.</i>	<i>More in the social sciences than in the natural sciences.</i>
3	<i>Being taught in my native language probably would be easier, but I wouldn't do it.</i>	<i>Teachers sometimes correct spoken mistakes if it isn't clear what the student wants to say.</i>
4	<i>My English is okay, so I don't think it would be easier for me to learn in my native language. I struggled with science vocabulary at the beginning, but now I am fine.</i>	<i>Teachers are very considerate and try to speak slower and use more simple words.</i>
5	<i>It wouldn't make a difference because I am fluent in three languages. However, non-native English speakers do struggle at school.</i>	<i>Barely. The curriculum is taught in English and teachers do not mark any foreign language.</i>
6	<i>I started learning English six years ago, but English is very much my mother tongue now. It is a very good language to learn in because you can transfer knowledge easily to other subjects. The IB is very much about learning definitions and explaining concepts, so the being able to use precise language is extremely important in IB exams.</i>	<i>All our teachers act as an example for perfectly spoken English and thereby pass on those language skills to their students.</i>
7	<i>[participant in a native English speaker] I definitely benefit from being a native English speaker a lot. Most IB exams are exam-based and require lots of clarity. In that sense, the IB is quite biased towards English-speakers.</i>	<i>Teachers correct mistakes as they are reading essays, but other than that language is not a big issue. None of my friends struggle in English.</i>
8	<i>[participant in a native English speaker]</i>	<i>Teachers look more at content, not so much at the language.</i>
9	<i>Being taught in English is very different because language also comes with certain cultural influences; in my case, a very Western influence. English was not a problem for me in the IB though because I have been learning English since I was a little kid.</i>	<i>Speaking English at all times was extremely important at our school. Only outside of class it was allowed to speak other languages.</i>
10	<i>I am bilingual so it is not a big deal for me. I probably would be a different person if I wasn't taught in English, but overall it wouldn't affect my life that much.</i>	<i>Some teachers recognize that there are many nationalities in the classroom, but they don't really pay attention to the language aspect.</i>
11	<i>[participant is a native English speaker] I am bilingual, but since the school is in English, my English is much better than my *censored*[language of host country].</i>	<i>Teachers only pay attention to language if they need to student to clarify something. Teachers are only concerned about the content and that you can use certain key words in essays.</i>

Figure 4.11. Students Responses on Language Aspects. Overview of students' responses when asked about language aspects in relation to fostering autonomy.

The last question of the three language-related questions asked participants to think of any resources their teachers use to help them or other students who struggle with English. The vast majority of participants were not able to come up with a specific example and stated that subject teachers do not pay much attention to the language and only look at the content. One reason that is mentioned is that students who are in the DP normally do not struggle with language anymore (if they ever did struggle with English). However, two participants were able to think of a concrete example where their teacher did try to offer additional language support:

- *“my Korean friend barely speaks English at all. He gets the coursework and he goes to learning support where he has a Korean speaker who also speaks English to understand what the task is. Alongside with regular intensive English training, his grades are slowly improving in every subject”* (Interview 5, appendix: 114)
- *“he takes his time and goes like, ‘Guys, work on this individually for some time, I’m gonna explain this to him”* (Interview 6, appendix: 124)

Most participants’ responses on this matter were very short as they either had no idea whether there is any language support or they simply mentioned that the school offers EAL support that students can go to if they want.

5. FOSTERING LEARNER AUTONOMY

This section is based on the concept of *learner autonomy* as outlined in section 2 and on the data collected in my empirical investigation. The combination of the theory and the analysis of the interviews allowed me compile a list of different ways of fostering autonomy. Those ways of fostering learner autonomy have been categorized and were grouped together in the following four subsections. The last subsection, *Threats to Autonomy*, is a list of possible and common obstacles that may stand in the way of this process.

In the following five subsections, participants were referred to by their interview number. In other words, the teacher who participated in the pilot interview will be referred to by *Pilot Teacher*, the teacher of Interview 1 will be referred to by *Teacher 1*, the teacher of the second interview *Teacher 2* and so on. The same labeling was used for the students.

5.1. By Motivating Students

Learner autonomy can be fostered in many ways. One of the most obvious ways is to get students motivated to do work and get them to be interested in the topics covered in class. I will discuss two aspects of student motivation that are closely related to each other: Developing a mindset in students that positively contributes to their learning and getting students to be intrinsically motivated to learn about a certain topic. I believe that the latter cannot be achieved without the former. Thus, I will begin by outlining the development of a growth mindset.

Students' Mindset

When educators think of motivation, the first thought that will probably come to mind is a distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. At least I myself am guilty of this, as the first sentence in section 2.2. (*Intrinsic Motivation and Self-Regulation*) is referring to exactly this distinction. However, Teacher 2 and Student 11 introduce an interesting concept as they both mention the importance of

ensuring that students have a *growth mindset* when it comes to any kind of learning (appendix: 32-37, 160-162). What is meant by that term is that students should not believe in a fixed concept of intelligence (i.e. a “fixed mindset”) that cannot be changed, but instead think of it as something that can be changed (i.e. a “growth mindset”) (Dweck 2016: 12ff). Rubie-Davies also picked up this dichotomy and points out the importance of teachers having a belief “that people’s intelligence can be improved with appropriate teaching” (2015: 36). Student 11 provides an example in which the school split up their students into two math groups. Even though those two groups received the exact same instruction by the same teachers, it was obvious that one group had more students who were talented at math than the other group. As a result, the students in the allegedly weaker math group developed a negatively associated mindset, namely that they are not good at math and were therefore put in this group (appendix: 162). While the ability separation of students in those split-up groups may have occurred unintentionally, students were still left to their disappointment and felt labeled. The school at which Teacher 2 teaches aims to avoid this by training their teachers how to develop a growth mindset in children (ibid: 37). For Teacher 2, the main goal is to boost his students’ confidence, as he believes that the more confident a learner is, the more autonomous he or she also is (ibid: 35). He promotes confidence in students by drawing attention to the fact that every human being has his or her individual strengths and weaknesses. He uses the so-called *Wheel of Awareness*, a concept taken from the book *The Whole-Brain Child* by Siegel and Bryson (2011) which explains that “kids get stuck on one particular point on the rim of their wheel of awareness, and lose sight of the many other parts of themselves” (Siegel 2010). It is the role of the parent or educator then to redirect the child to focus on other facets of their personality (or their *rim*) as well and not just on the parts that are unsuccessful (ibid).

This suggests that personal aspects such as confidence and one’s mindset are closely related to autonomy and should receive appropriate attention when fostering autonomous learners at school. It can also generally be assumed that a confident learner with a growth mindset is usually also an intrinsically motivated learner (see e.g. Sari et al. 2015; Deci & Ryan 1985; Vallerand & Reid 1984). Therefore, I will also discuss briefly the role intrinsic motivation plays when fostering autonomous learners.

Intrinsic Motivation

In the learner characteristics handout that was given to students and teachers, one item specifically addressed the concept intrinsic motivation. The fact that there is a huge body of research linking learner autonomy and intrinsic motivation makes it impossible not to discuss it here as well. I already touched on this topic in section 2.2., so I will not go much deeper into the theory, but rather provide evidence from my own empirical research that illustrates the position of this concept in relation to learner autonomy.

One reoccurring theme in my research is goal-setting. It is often mentioned in relation to motivation for a quite obvious reason: Setting a goal already constitutes evidence for a learner being intrinsically motivated. A learner who has no drive to learn, inquire, and make new connections will never even start to get him- or herself to set personal goals. Teacher 1 claims that personal goal setting itself already increases intrinsic motivation because it is the students themselves who get to decide what they want to achieve (appendix: 24). A similar statement was made by Teacher 2, who regularly provides voluntary “home learning” research tasks for his students where the students can choose certain tasks to do outside of class and bring them in to share (ibid: 39). An advantage that comes with those home learning assignments is that it shows the difference in motivation among students in class:

The children don't have to do that, but the intrinsically motivated ones will do that. The other unmotivated ones don't get bored at the same time. So, it's quite good and you can see the ones who really want to do good work for class, you can see the ones who did it because the parents at home said you have to do this.
(appendix: 39)

This kind of blended learning approach is also emphasized by Teacher 4, who has a very strong take on intrinsic motivation in relation to personal interest:

Yea, so my philosophy of education kind of now is, it's my job to inspire kids. Because they can learn anything in one second. They don't need teachers anymore with books. If you spark their interest, they can research it. And it's my job to make them want to do that.
(appendix: 57).

Her attitude towards teaching and learning is that the teacher needs to make content interesting in order to develop learners who are intrinsically motivated due

to personal interest. One very simple, yet effective, way of personalizing content is to encourage peer learning. Student 5, for instance, is a firm believer in class discussions where every student provides his or her own inputs based on the materials that have been provided by the teacher. He states that

when you are listening to your friend giving you some information, it's a lot different from reading something in a book. And that way you also get a lot more interested in the course because it's something personal, something shared.
(appendix: 110).

Thus, the role of peers can be a very important one when it comes to developing intrinsically motivated learners. The teacher needs to ensure that the learning environment is a positive and productive one in which everyone feels comfortable to share his or her opinions and can contribute actively. Teacher 1 points out that he is also eager to personalize content in his lessons. He uses personal journals in order to make content more personal for his students: "I have students write journals that involve making connections between personal experiences and the course" (appendix: 25). Thus, it can be said that these personal connections that students make in class, either based on their own experiences or based on their peer's input, is what makes the motivation an intrinsic one. However, as Teacher 3 points out, even if students get to choose their tasks and thereby follow their personal interest, some students still fail to show any signs of being intrinsically motivated. Teacher 3 was the only participant who also considered the possibility that students may actually not want to be autonomous and be in charge of their own learning:

But with the older kids, so the grade 10 kids, I give them very much freedom to choose their own direction and I also find it sometimes ... they are lacking the intrinsic motivation, for example. Not everyone wants to be autonomous, and I think that needs to be taken into account.
(appendix: 50)

Intriguingly, out of a total of 15 participants, only one person actually considered this possibility, while all other participants never seemed to question the concept of fostering autonomous learners. However, Teacher 3 also clearly states that she believes intrinsic motivation to be a prerequisite of learner autonomy (appendix: 46).

Based on the data collected in this study, it can be concluded that being autonomous is a goal that is most likely only pursued by learners who are also intrinsically motivated to learn. This motivation may be developed by the teacher,

or it can be a preexisting condition; however, it seems to be evident that a learner cannot be autonomous without being intrinsically motivated as no goal setting and no independent drive for inquiry will take place.

5.2. By Training Teachers

The fact that teachers are an essential element in any learning process that happens at schools is undeniable. In the end, as the Pilot Teacher puts it, “inside the classroom it comes down to the atmosphere or the expectations that you set as a teacher” (appendix: 16). This section will therefore take a closer look at the role of the teacher in the classroom. There are many aspects that need to be considered and a lot of input about the role of the teacher in relation to fostering learner autonomy was provided in both teacher and student interviews. I have highlighted what I believe to be the three most important and reoccurring aspects. At first, I will introduce a new term that has been brought into this discussion by Teacher 2, *namely assessment-capable learners*. Then, I will provide an account of different classroom activities that have especially been highlighted in the student interviews and were considered to be suitable for fostering autonomous learners. Finally, and this is probably no surprise as we are dealing with a highly diverse and international target group, I will discuss the importance of teachers being aware of cultural differences in the classroom.

Assessment-Capable Learners

One aspect of fostering autonomy that was especially highlighted in teacher interview 2 was to train teachers to produce so-called “assessment-capable learners” (appendix: 33). What this teacher refers to is a concept also highlighted by John Hattie, who believes that “the primary function of assessment is to support learning by generating feedback that students can act upon in terms of where they are going, how they are going there, and where they might go next” (Hattie 2012: 126). The aim of this is to develop students who “are more able and motivated to access, interpret, and use information from quality assessments in ways that affirm or further their learning” (ibid: 126). Teacher 2 realizes this in the classroom by letting students set their own targets and providing them with challenges of varying degrees of difficulty (appendix: 35-36). This is done on a school-wide scale, where the school’s leadership team implements regular professional development on

fostering assessment-capable learners and equipping students with a growth mindset (appendix: 37). This also entails that at any given time, the student is expected to provide detailed information about his or her learning journey. A sample student response when asked about their learning in class would be:

Oh, we have been learning how to add up using column addition. Now we are going to apply that to solve these problems. And next, we are going to do some more problem-solving examples (appendix: 37).

Another way students need to show that they are assessment-capable learners is at parent conferences, or “three-way conferences, where the teacher, the parents, and the child talk about the child’s learning” (appendix: 37). Students play a crucial role in those conferences as they are the ones leading them. They show their learning portfolio to their parents and their teacher to demonstrate what they have learned in class. Parents are then encouraged to ask reflection questions to their child, such as: “[W]hat was the hardest part of that learning? How did you overcome any challenges then? If you did this in a different way, how would you do it differently?” (ibid: 37). But also questions about the IB learner profiles are asked, such as: “[H]ow did you show you were a risk-taker in this unit?” (ibid: 36). During these conferences, students go through their portfolio and tick off all their targets (i.e. some sort of checklist with goals and sub-goals) until they went through the entire academic year (ibid: 36).

Enabling students to be capable of holding conferences like this requires a lot of preparation and practice in class. The teacher fosters this through regular discussions with the children in which they ask them: “‘When were you a risk-taker this week?’ or ‘How are you self-reflective?’” (appendix: 35). It is a long and time-consuming process “that starts all the way from key stage one right until they leave” (ibid: 35).

Similar approaches have been pointed out by Teacher 1 who “get[s] students to set goals for what grade they want and to get in the unit and also to outline a plan in terms of what kinds of strategies they will be using” (appendix: 24). That this requires a lot of training for the teacher becomes evident in Teacher Interview 3, where the teacher states that she “tried to help them [the students] to set their own goals, but they would lose track of them” (ibid: 46).

Teacher 4, a teacher who – based on her educational background – is a lot more experienced in fostering autonomous behavior, emphasized the importance of making students aware of their learning style. This done using various online resources on “learning skills characteristics, or study types” (ibid: 55)⁷. Students 1 and 2 both pointed out the benefits of learning collaboratively with their peers (ibid: 71-72, 81). Student 2 especially shared his thoughts on the importance of knowing one’s most effective learning strategies:

However I’m still kind of searching for learning methods so, like, I’m still not there. I discovered recently that... social learning, so working in pairs and stuff is actually quite effective for me, but I think I can still develop it further to better learning methods.
(appendix: 81)

A preference for working together was also pointed out by Student 4 who states: “one way I learn well is by discussing and talking about it. So if it’s a group, it’s a debate or a discussion, that way I can learn faster” (appendix: 99). Student 10 on the other hand believes she remembers things better by writing them down instead of typing:

Like, the majority of people at our school, they type. And I am still sitting there with my books and write (laughs) because that’s how I remember it. And before I test I have to recopy things because otherwise it doesn’t enter my head.
(appendix: 154)

A student who does not know his or her learning style, will most likely be less effective in his or her learning, as it is illustrated by Student 8:

Right at the end, I just go through everything again. I don’t really interpret the information and link it my previous information, I just kind of learn everything all over again
(appendix: 136-137).

This student still seems to not have found her learning style and therefore most likely spends a large amount of time revising before exams as she fails to incorporate new knowledge in her existing knowledge system: “I think it is difficult for me to interpret new information that activate prior knowledge because that’s not the way I learn” (appendix: 136). Thus, being aware of one’s learning style is a crucial prerequisite to being an efficient autonomous and/or assessment-capable learner.

⁷ One specific test used for that is this one: <https://www.16personalities.com/free-personality-test>.

Classroom Activities

Another effective way to foster autonomy is by choosing the right classroom activities. Teacher 1 distinguishes between structured and unstructured activities. The former would be activities that require students to answer short questions or go through a multiple-choice worksheet, while the latter would be classroom discussions or assignments that allow for more flexibility (appendix: 25). Examples for assignments that allow for more flexibility would be to allow students to present information through various forms, such as a Powerpoint presentation, a Prezi, or a video (ibid: 25, 56). The reason why Teacher 1 highlights discussions is because if the question is a very broad one, then “students can choose many different ways to answer” (ibid: 25). Student 2 also points out that class discussions can help “to accept new ideas” (ibid: 83). Students 5, 6, and 7 also pointed out the benefits of using discussions in class (ibid: 111, 116, 129). For instance, Student 5 mentions the Harkness method (a teaching approach that mainly relies on discussions) that “is now being adopted in the majority of humanities based subjects” by teachers at his school (ibid: 111).

In the case of Teacher 2, where the school’s leadership team is eager to promote qualities related to learner autonomy, training teachers to implement the school’s mission is vital. This has also been pointed out by the Pilot Teacher, who mentioned in her interview that things such as “lifelong learning, and creativity, and teamwork” are all expressed in the school’s mission and learner outcomes (appendix: 16). Teacher 3 expresses similar thoughts, however, she is mainly questioning whether these values actually make it to the classroom (ibid: 48).

Differentiation was one common theme when asked about classroom activities and interaction with teachers in relation to fostering learner autonomy. Student 6 particularly advocates his favorite teacher’s efforts to provide individual support during lessons, providing a good balance of student-centered and teacher-led approaches:

So, usually the way he structures it is he spends ten minutes explaining something and then he spends the next fifty minutes of the period by answering questions of people. So, it’s very focused on us, but it’s also very focused on knowledge transfer from him to us and not just knowledge floating around the room and us randomly picking it up.
(appendix: 119)

The student further explains how this teacher provides lots of additional materials, whereas his math teacher provides support in a way that does not foster autonomy:

And then my math teacher, he usually sits in the cafeteria during lunch break and he goes, 'I am there for you and anyone who needs help can come to me, whether you are in my class or not. Anything, just approach me and I will do the math with you. But then he doesn't give you any resources with it. So once you are done with that one problem, you are going to have to go to him again next time you have another problem.
(appendix: 120-121)

The importance of providing (additional) resources for students is also highlighted by Student 4, whose theatre teacher once differentiated based on language proficiency. The students provides an example for this:

We were doing a Shakespeare book and we had a student who was struggling with English quite a lot and so obviously they're going to struggle a lot with Shakespeare so the teacher got him a book which is for primary students or like for early years. So it would help him understand way better and it did help quite a lot.
(appendix: 105)

This not only shows that differentiation and providing additional, individualized support is a vital part of fostering autonomy, but – more importantly – that differentiation is also highly appreciated by IB students, regardless of whether they themselves need it or not. As a sidenote, this is also why, after the topic *differentiation* was mentioned several times in the Pilot Interview (cf. appendix: 18-19), an additional question explicitly asking about differentiation was added to all teacher and student interviews.

Cultural Differences

A rather obvious, yet crucial factor at an international school is the clash of various cultures melting together in one place. Teachers need to be equipped with the necessary background knowledge on the host country's culture, the culture of their students, and the culture of their students' parents. The difficulty of dealing with parents from other cultures when fostering autonomy has been pointed out by all teachers except for Teacher 3. Teacher 1 and Teacher 2 both specifically mentioned Asian parents in this context. Teacher 1 comments on how "Asian education has placed a little less value on autonomy", claiming that Asian parents "expect teachers to be leading the classroom" (appendix: 26). Teacher 2 states that most of his parents only care about their child's academic progress and that

very few parents wonder whether their child is “independent” or “proactive” (appendix: 37). Also the Pilot Teacher mentions the lack of independence that especially Asian students tend to show. She explains that Asian students “are quite reliant on the teacher and [that] they cannot wait for the teacher to tell them exactly what to say and how to do things and what to do” (ibid: 14). Student 2 highlights the fact that simply being taught in a certain language comes with cultural influences (ibid: 86). Student 9 even believes that the language of instruction has an effect on the approach the teacher uses in the classroom. She claims that by using a certain language of instruction, the teacher will also bring a different perspective in the classroom (ibid: 147f). This ties in with what has been said in section 2.3. about Littlewood’s (1999: 75-76) claim that students in Eastern cultures prefer a style of fostering autonomy that is reactive, i.e. an approach that “does not create its own directions” (Littlewood 1999: 75).

Teachers need to be aware of these differences and consider them when fostering learner autonomy. The biggest challenge will be to cater for all these different needs of students, parents, and other influencing factors of the school’s or host country’s culture or conventions.

5.3. By Training students

Many aspects that relate to training students are inevitably tied to those of training teachers. A teacher needs to be trained in assessing student needs and how to cater for those needs before he or she can train students accordingly. This section will take a closer look at what kind of skills and competences students need to obtain in order to become successful autonomous learners. I will mainly investigate the students’ perspectives on learner autonomy and what they identified in their interviews as strengths and weaknesses in their learning. Ultimately, this also shows to what extent IB students are reflective of their learning and whether they can link their reflections to an IB framework.

Reflecting on Learning Style

Out of all the teachers that have been interviewed, Teacher 4 is probably the strongest advocate of making students aware of their learning style (cf. appendix:

55). Knowing what kind of learner one is and what kind of learning works best for oneself is extremely beneficial and most certainly increases effectiveness in learning. Fortunately, many students shared their reflections about how they learn and what works and what does not work for them in the interviews. As Student 2 points out, “IB is probably something that you learn to learn, and so in order to learn, you kind of need to reflect on what you did good and bad” (appendix: 82). He further states that this is something that is mainly fostered through CAS because “CAS reflection is what makes you pass, so being reflective is definitely also a crucial part of IB I think” (ibid: 82). This particular student seemed to be a highly reflected learner as he was not only able to provide his preferences in terms of assessment, but also considers the fact that everyone’s learning style and learning preference is different:

I personally like to yeah, do more creative work like essays rather than doing handouts [...] but this does provide different ways of knowing for each individual and each individual has different methods for self-directed learning
(appendix: 85)

A similar point is made by Student 9 who also explicitly makes references to different learner styles, such as visual learners:

I mean, there are different students with different background. Some people are visual learners, some prefer to take notes and stuff. So people will have different opinions about freedom.
(appendix: 147)

These learning styles are nowadays often referred to as the *VARK model* by Neil Fleming and Mills, who first designed a questionnaire to assess preferences for different modes of communication (cf. Fleming & Mills 1992; Fleming 2012). The acronym VARK stands for visual, aural, read/write, and kinesthetic (ibid). In the quote above, Student 9 refers to visual learners and learners who learn best by reading or writing information. As this student points out, different learners will have different preferences for learning. It can be very useful for learners to assess their own learning and then try to find ways of acquiring and memorizing information that caters to those needs. While a teacher may support this process, ultimately the student needs to find out him- or herself what strategies are most useful and effective for learning. The teacher’s role here is mainly to provide support to students by giving them some leeway in the way they go about their learning.

Independence and Freedom

The importance of teachers giving their students a certain amount of independence and freedom has already been discussed in previous sections. However, no matter how well a teacher provides for needed flexibility, a learner will only be successful if he or she also knows how to utilize this flexibility. Both teachers and students have pointed out the risks of giving students too much freedom (see e.g. appendix: 24, 46, 50, 75). However, having a certain degree of choice as a student “allow[s] you to take responsibility” for your learning (ibid: 132). Thus, freedom is an essential aspect for becoming an autonomous learner and it is therefore important for students to know how to work with this gained trust that is given to them by the teacher.

The student interviews showed that students have quite different opinions and attitudes about this topic. For instance, when Student 1 was asked how teachers help students with a lower English language proficiency outside of class, his response was that “when students don’t understand something they can just google the definition in the dictionary and then they understand it” (appendix: 77). This student therefore seems to set expectations relatively high in terms of taking responsibility for one’s own learning for students with lower levels of English. Student 9, on the other hand, believes that many students would struggle to take up this kind of responsibility, assuming that “some students might slack off or delay” (ibid: 147).

Enabling students by giving them as much freedom as possible is certainly a goal pursued by the school of Student 11 as she explains:

I think that’s what they are doing or trying to do by giving us free periods. Like, ‘Look, we are giving you this time to do whatever you want, just know that you have stuff to do and that you need to be organized. But we are not gonna restrict you’.
(appendix: 164)

She elaborates further on the importance of being organized as a student and the dangers of enjoying maybe a bit too much freedom:

I think it’s just more about the organization and the knowledge of how you organize yourself. Because you just get more freedom as you grow older and freedom is hard, you know. You can do anything with it.
(appendix: 164)

Thus, if teachers give students more freedom and responsibility, they also need to make sure to train them how to organize their learning and prioritize the work they have to complete. None of the teachers or students made any specific suggestions on how to this can be accomplished other than through goal-setting. Whenever participants were asked to provide concrete examples, the examples provided were very vague and general responses such as worksheets in the case of Teacher 1 (appendix: 25). Teacher 2 uses posters on walls and portfolios (ibid: 36-37), Teacher 3 emphasizes the fact that fostering autonomy is a long process that needs to be implemented “well over a long period of time” (ibid: 50), and Teacher 4 mentions an online personality test, but does not go into further detail on how she uses it to help students continuously (ibid: 55).

This vagueness is probably due to the fact that teachers simply lack adequate training in fostering autonomy, as this is something that was not covered to a large extent in their teacher training (see section 4.1.5.). Needless to say, without proper teacher training, appropriate student training will never be possible.

5.4. By Using ICT in the Classroom

Contemporary research suggests that the use of technology correlates with self-directed learning (see e.g. Rashid & Asghar 2016; Holt & Brockett 2012). The role of ICT at IB schools is always an important one as the curriculum is highly research-based. This makes it almost impossible to be a successful IB student without having access to a computer and the internet. This section will take a closer look at how and why teachers use ICT inside and outside of the classroom and compare the findings of the teacher interviews with the attitudes towards the use of technology at school that were brought up in the student interviews.

Online Resources

Given that the IB is a very research-intensive curriculum, the huge array of resources that become available through the internet and the use of laptops in class makes it much easier for students to access information independently.

Teacher 1 also considers this to be one of the main benefits of using technology at school as he explains in the interview:

If the student has a laptop or even just a phone with internet access, they have access to pretty much the entire knowledge that has been compiled since the beginning of time on the other device. So, with that sort of access, it allows students to take control of their own learning. They can look up a research study, for instance. They can investigate what a particular neurotransmitter does. So, I think giving the students access to the internet, to all of the information and knowledge that's available online, can really support autonomy.
(appendix: 27)

This kind of independent research that Teacher 1 describes above is especially necessary for the Extended Essay, as Student 8 points out:

Especially for your extended essay, it's all about independent learning. So without internet, I don't think we would be able to be that independent because then we would have to rely on our teachers to tell us everything or use books.
(appendix: 139)

Student 2 and 7 make similar remarks about relying on teachers. They both drew attention to the fact that any information the teacher provides comes from a very limited and subjective point of view, whereas the internet provides a myriad of information that reflects various perspectives (appendix: 84, 131). For this reason, Student 7 believes that this also changes teacher expectations in terms of originality of the work one submits as a student:

I think a lot of teachers expect that we will all have different idea when we write essays for exams just because we will have all been expected to google or search for our individual resources.
(appendix: 131)

Another advantage is that these resources come in different formats. A textbook is a static format that entails writing and images. Digital resources, on the other hand, are dynamic and come in various different formats such as video, audio, or interactive elements such as questionnaires. Teacher 1 states that he likes to use different forms of media for his teachings, not just to provide information to students, but also for students to be able to demonstrate their knowledge, for instance by presenting using PowerPoint or creating an online quiz (appendix: 28). These media can generally provide specific information much faster than a book

(ibid: 112), which allows students to spend more time on creative tasks such as essays or working on internal assessments⁸ (ibid: 84).

Home Learning

The term *home learning* was introduced to me by Teacher 2, who works at a school that prefers this term over *homework* (appendix: 39). ICT at his school is very well developed and used throughout all grades for various purposes. For instance, a class blog is used in which topics from the day will be posted and students are encouraged to contribute in an online discussion. The aim is to motivate students to continue learning at home through commenting on blog posts (ibid: 38). Blogs are one part of home learning, but Teacher 2 provides several voluntary home learning tasks on a weekly basis in order to cater to the needs of students who are particularly interested in a certain topic and would like to learn more about it (ibid: 39).

Teacher 1 makes all his course materials available online to support autonomous learners who may want to revise at home (appendix: 25). Almost all students positively highlighted how their teachers direct them to resources online for additional support. Students 1, 2, and 4 mention a math tool called “Cognify” (ibid: 75, 84, 103), Student 4 also mentions a website for online learning called “Khan Academy” (ibid: 103), and Student 8 mentions that her math teacher even has his own website (ibid: 139). Student 6 explains how his economics teacher uploads the entire content of the lesson prior to teaching the lesson:

So he starts teaching and for everything he is explaining there is a document available with notes of what he is saying. So you can jump ahead, you can go back, you can do all that.
(appendix: 121)

Another advantage of having all resources online is that it promotes ubiquitous learning, i.e. a “learning environment, which enables anyone to learn at anyplace at anytime” (Yahya, Ahmad, Jalil 2010: 1). Student 11 highlights the benefit of online resources that are available all the time:

I can’t carry around my textbook all the time so my psychology teacher sent me a link to the scanned textbooks. So when I am here [at the shopping

⁸ Internal Assessments (IAs) are assignments that students work on independently. These are normally papers or research projects.

mall], I could study here even though I don't have my textbook with me. I think that's where I find the most help.
(appendix: 163)

This ultimately also fosters autonomy as it helps the learner to organize his or her learning better and make use of his or her time more efficiently.

Finally, home learning can be used as a differentiation tool as explained by Teacher 4 who implemented a flipped classroom in order to address a highly heterogeneous class of varying competence levels:

So, when I was an Individuals and Societies teacher, so two years ago I had a full course load. And I did the flipped classroom and I felt that was the best for me because I could record my own videos of giving my own lesson or other videos that have been made. And class time was mainly for work and for me to help and support the kids.
(appendix: 57)

The benefits of using ICT may be the biggest one for any learning that takes place outside the classroom. Resources can be made available online for students to revise content, or to satisfy the needs of highly motivated and interested students. Both students and teachers highlight many positive aspects of using technology outside the classroom. It can therefore only be assumed that this trend will develop further in the near future and will continue to be a major contributing factor for fostering learner autonomy.

Dangers and Possible Challenges

Unfortunately, ICT does not only enable students to become more autonomous in their learning and support their understanding. Several students also pointed out various disadvantages. Some of these have already been discussed briefly in section 4.2.5., but I would like to go into more detail on some of them by providing statements that have been made by students in the interviews.

The main argument that has been made against the use of ICT at school is that it can be distracting. Student 3 mentions how a supposedly quick visit to YouTube can end in a thirty minute session of procrastination that only wastes time that could be used more efficiently for studying (appendix: 94). Student 5 brings up a similar example with facebook, but concludes with a positive note on the benefits of using ICT at school: "I'd say we definitely get more out of it than we lose" (ibid: 112).

Students 3 and 9 both state that the fact that teachers make all information available online leads to increased inattentiveness in class. They argue that students are under a lot more pressure to pay attention and take notes in class when there is no way to look up the information later online (ibid: 94, 146-147). On a more positive note, Student 10 believes that it is much easier to remember new information when writing them down by hand (ibid: 154). The same is true for reading because, as Student 5 claims, “when you read a book it’s a lot easier to pick up on a story because it’s a much slower pace” (ibid: 112).

One useful suggestion to decrease the amount of distraction during class that was brought up by Student 6 is that “when you are listening to the teacher, everyone should have their computers closed. And then when you are doing work, your computer should be allowed for googling and doing research” (appendix: 121). He describes very passionately how his economics teacher monitors the learning of the students in his classroom and makes sure that everyone stays in task (ibid: 121). This shows that it is not only teachers who are concerned about the learning progress of students in class, but also the students themselves who sometimes prefer some authoritarian structure to ensure a productive learning environment.

5.5. Threats to Autonomy

Some of the possible threats to autonomy that come with the use of ICT at schools have just been mentioned, but there are also many other obstacles teachers and students have to overcome.

Teachers

The lack of teacher training for fostering learner autonomy has already been touched upon in sections 4.1.5. and 5.2. and is a major threat to fostering autonomous learners (see e.g. appendix: 38, 47-48, 57). However, I would like to draw attention to the response of Teacher 1 when he was asked whether he had done any IB professional development training that related to fostering autonomous learners:

I have only taken one IB course. That was the category one in psychology. I did the online version of it. And category one is meant primarily just to introduce the teacher to the course, the syllabus, the assessments and so

on. So, it doesn't really get into the classroom strategies. It's more of an introductory course to get teacher up to speed with the curriculum.
(appendix: 27)

The IB imposes a requirement for authorization that each teacher must receive IB-approved training for his subject (Abrioux & Rutherford 2013: 164f). This is the "category one" course that Teacher 1 is referring to in the quote above. An online PD (professional development) course, the cheapest option for training the IB currently offers, is currently quoted at \$600 USD (IBO 2017h). While there is no data available on how many teachers receive what kind of training at schools, it is safe to assume that due to high costs for schools, most teachers only complete a category one course. Especially young and small schools often struggle with financing an IB program, allowing very little room for professional development in other areas.

Another threat related to this is that IB schools are often in competition to each other. When looking through brochures and websites of IB schools, the vast majority of schools will publish at least some information about their DP students' scores. Often times, these are compared to the worldwide average scores of students published by the IB (see IBO 2017i). Teacher 1 believes that this contributes to a problem well-known at schools worldwide, namely *teaching to test*. He elaborates on that problem in great detail during his interview:

I think that personally one of the threats to autonomy is when teachers feel a lot of pressure to produce certain exam results. I think under those conditions, teachers feel that they have to really take over the reins because they want to produce students who get good results and they may not have faith to let go of the power. And I think the irony is that, I think, if you give students autonomy in the right way, it's not going to have any negative effect on the results. In fact, I think it might even have a positive effect on the results. But at the same time I think that people, teachers, naturally get nervous if they feel that they are going to be judged harshly if students don't perform well and they might be very hesitant to let students be in charge of their own learning when they feel that they will become responsible for it.
(appendix: 26-27).

As pointed out several times in previous sections, giving students some amount of freedom and independence is crucial for fostering autonomy. Based on the quote above, it seems that one of the biggest threats to autonomy are actually the schools themselves by engaging in a worldwide competition that is solely based on artificial measurements such as IB exam results. The danger of this is that exam results are often decisive factors for parents when choosing a school.

Parents in general are often a problematic part of an international school community, as they form an extremely diverse group. International school parents come from all parts of the world and therefore have very differing views and attitudes towards education. Teachers 1, 2, and 4 all mentioned the difficulty of dealing with parents in their interview (appendix: 26, 37, 56). Teacher 1 and 2 highlight the fact that especially Asian parents often dismiss fostering autonomous behavior as they generally only tend to care about their child's academics (ibid: 26, 37). Teacher 4 rather points out the time gap of when parents went to school and what education looked like a few decades ago versus what the philosophy education is like now (ibid: 56). In the end, education does change and develop at a rapid rate, which can make it challenging for parents to adapt to these new ideas of taking charge of one's learning and being an autonomous learner.

Students

Many students and teachers point out the difficulty of finding the right balance of providing the right amount of choice and freedom for students. Teacher 3 especially highlighted this in her interview when talking about her younger learners (appendix: 46-50).

The student interviews show though that it does not seem so much to be an age-related problem, but rather one that is contingent on personality and preferences. As Student 5 points out, the IB is "strongly research based" and "student-led" (ibid: 109). It therefore already requires an inclination towards research and self-direction in order to be successful. Thus, a personality such as Student 11, who describes herself as a "huge procrastinator" (ibid: 160) may not be an ideal IB student. Teacher 3 also recognizes this fact and points out that giving students too much freedom may be counterproductive as "not everybody wants to be autonomous" (ibid: 50). Forcing it may even lead to students thinking that teachers are not doing their job, as it is pointed out by Teacher 3 and Student 4 (ibid: 50, 101). For instance, Student 4 shares his frustration with some of his teachers who he believes are not providing enough support:

Some of them [teachers] struggle with keeping the students motivated... Some of them might have problems with responsibility of outcomes even though that's ours but a lot of them just say they're doing their job and

they're not willing to expand that more than that limit. That is quite bad I think, so of outcomes or like, keeping the students motivated or helping and keeping track of all their students and helping them as much as they can (appendix: 101)

Student 4 also criticizes that his teachers often do not give him clear guidelines as to how he can improve. He mentions that some of his teachers' instructions "are quite abstract" (appendix: 102). Thus, it is also the personality and type of learner that needs to be considered and that can actually be a major threat for fostering learner autonomy.

Other personal examples brought up by students were:

- not knowing how to use time effectively (Student 2, appendix: 72)
- an unpopular student not having peers to work with collaboratively (Student 3, appendix: 91)
- not knowing one's ultimate goal in life (Student 9: appendix: 144)
- not having confidence in one's own work (Student 11, appendix: 160)
- not being a responsible and organized person (Student 11, appendix: 164)

Language

The fact that content is taught in a language other than the one the student knows best is already a challenge by itself. Intriguingly, this is not something that most students consider to be a central challenge. One reason for that is that only DP students were interviewed. Thus, the language proficiency of those students whose first language is not English in most cases is native-like or very high. In my sample, the only exception to this is Student 3. However, when asked whether he considers language to be a barrier for his learning, he states:

I got used to English. Even though I don't speak it perfectly, I got used to it. It's also hard to say for me because let's say I have two mother tongues and I don't speak perfectly any of them so English for me is like, my third language that is still in progress of learning (appendix: 95)

Intriguingly, even though this student obviously does struggle with the language, he would still not consider taking the IB in one of his own mother tongues (appendix: 95). One of the reasons for this may be something Student 5 mentions:

the majority of the world's information is findable and searchable in English. So in the context of independent learning, English has to be the most useful language out of them all.
(appendix: 113)

Thus, it can be assumed that IB students are willing to face those language obstacles in return for learning and using a language that opens up many opportunities and provides more choices and resources.

However, while language may not be a threat to autonomous learning on a long term scale, it still is on a day-to-day basis. There are many instances where teachers and students pointed out communication problems in class due to limited language skills of the students (see e.g. appendix: 29, 42, 59, 77, 92f, 104, 148).

One of the biggest problems related specifically to fostering autonomous learners who are less proficient in the language of instruction is that simply explaining the concept and providing resources that help fostering autonomous learning is a major challenge. Teacher 2 highlights that “the [learning] steps are all in English and the journey is all in English”, which makes it difficult for less proficient learner to become successful autonomous learners (appendix: 41-42). Something similar is pointed out by Teacher 4 who states that “it’s hard to explain something abstract such as autonomous learning” (ibid: 59).

This shows that while language may not be a substantial problem for intermediate and advanced speakers of English, it certainly can be for less proficient learners. These learners, however, were not included in my study. Thus, more research specifically targeting this group is needed.

6. SUMMARY & CONCLUSION

Learner autonomy is a concept that is an integral part of the written curriculum of all IB programmes. It features aspects such as providing freedom for students to choose how - and also to a certain degree - what they learn, passing on some of the responsibility for learning progress to the students. It aims at fostering intrinsic motivation, self-regulation, and being a reflective, lifelong learner. The DP utilizes an inquiry-based curriculum to produce learners that fulfill the description of the ten attributes of the IB learner profile: Learners who are inquirers, knowledgeable, thinkers, communicators, principled, open-minded, caring, risk-takers, balanced, and reflective (cf. appendix: 170). The curriculum is delivered through a backwards design approach, such as the *Understanding by Design®* framework by Wiggins and McTighe (2005).

Learners at IB schools are generally considered to be “globally mobile” (Hayden 2006: 41) and come from various backgrounds. In terms of their socio-economic status, they usually come from affluent homes with parents who value education and spend much thought into choosing the right school for their children (Hayden 2006: 32f). The teachers at international schools are often young expatriates who love to travel and wish to pursue an international teaching career (Hardman (2001: 132-133; Hayden 2006: 73-75).

The aim of this empirical study was to find out to what extent learner autonomy is fostered at IB schools, how this is achieved, and what the possible challenges are that teachers and students have to face in this process. Qualitative data was collected from a total of fifteen participants (four teachers, eleven students) using semi-structured interviews. The analysis of the results showed that both groups were homogeneous in their responses, showing only very little variance between individual students and teachers.

Teachers generally had similar opinions about the definition of learner autonomy. All teachers particularly highlighted the importance of differentiation in class and providing choices for students. Most of the analysis was therefore based on those two aspects. The use of ICT and using English as a medium of instruction was

dealt with in greater detail as they were a major part of the interview guide. ICT was generally perceived to be beneficial by both the teachers and the students. Aspects pertaining to the language of instruction were discussed, but turned out to be less of an obstacle for teachers and students than originally expected.

Students were surprisingly familiar with the concept of learner autonomy and self-directed learning and provided very detailed and accurate definitions of the term. Throughout the interview, students were able to share several examples of how teachers foster autonomy inside and outside of the classroom and showed an excellent understanding of the research question. Most students were also very competent in linking the concept learner autonomy to the IB framework and impressed by providing thoughtful responses. It is evident that IB students have a thorough understanding of the IB and the philosophy of education that comes with it. In this study, the students were certainly the experts in this field and provided much more thought-provoking input than the teachers did. As a researcher and prospective IB educator, I was overwhelmed by the quality and quantity of information that was provided by the students in this study and it should be noted that students are probably an unjustifiably underrated and underestimated group in academic research in the field of education. Similar to the teachers' statements, also students mainly shared thoughts on differentiation and choice during the interviews. Contrary to my expectations, data on ICT and especially language aspects in relation to fostering learner autonomy were scarce and hardly any new information was gathered in these two areas of inquiry. However, many useful testimonies of IB teachers and their instructional practices were collected, opening doors to many new areas of inquiry that could be investigated in academia.

Section 5 of this paper provides an array of possibilities how learner autonomy can be and is fostered at IB schools. These approaches can also be transferred to other settings such as international schools in general or even public schools that follow a national curriculum. The data collected for this thesis can certainly be applied at non-IB schools as well and will hopefully lead to more inquiry by other autonomous researchers and educators such as myself.

7. REFERENCES

- Allemann-Ghionda, Cristina. 2003. "The yellow streetcar: Shaping a polyphonic identity". In Tokuhamma-Esponosa, Tracey (ed.). *The multilingual mind: Issues discussed by, for, and about people living with many languages*. Westport, CT: Praeger, 171-188.
- Baker, Colin. 2001. *Foundations of bilingual education and bilingualism* (3rd edition). Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Bandura, Albert. 1989. "Social cognitive theory". In Vasta, Ross (ed.). *Annals of child development (vol. 6): Six theories of child development*. Greenwich, CT: JAI Press, 1-60.
- Bandura, Albert. 1997. *Self-efficacy: The exercise of control*. New York, NY: Freeman.
- Benson, Phil. 2007. "Autonomy in language teaching and learning". *Language Teaching* 40(1), 21-40.
- Benson, Phil; Voller, Peter (eds.). 1997. *Autonomy and independence in language learning*. New York, NY: Longman.
- Blessinger, Patrick; Carfora, John. 2015. "Innovative approaches in teaching and learning: An introduction to inquiry-based learning for multidisciplinary programs". In Blessinger, Patrick; Carfora, John (eds.). *Inquiry-based learning for multidisciplinary programs: A conceptual and practical resource for educators. Vol. 3*. Bingley: Emerald Group Ltd, 3-22.
- Brown, Douglas. 2000. *Principles of language learning and teaching* (4th edition). White Plains, NY: Pearson Education.
- Bruner, Jerome. 1962. *On knowing: Essays for the left hand*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Chomsky, Noam. 2013. "Noam Chomsky: The purpose of education". *The Daily Riff*. <http://www.thedailyriff.com/articles/noam-chomsky-the-purpose-of-education-869.php> [summary of embedded Youtube Video] (14 May 2017).
- Cotterall, Sara. 1995. "Developing a course strategy for learner autonomy". *ELT Journal* 49(3), 219-227.
- Cotterall, Sara. 2000. "Promoting learner autonomy through the curriculum: Principles for designing language courses". *ELT Journal* 54(2), 109-117.
- Curtis, Will; Murphy, Mark; Shields, Sam. 2014. *Research and education*. Abingdon: Routledge.

- Dam, Leni. 1990. "Learner autonomy in practice: An experiment in learning and teaching". In Gathercole, Ian (ed.). *Autonomy in language learning*. Conference papers. Great Britain: Centre for Information on Language Teaching and Research.
- Davies, Martin; Hughes, Nathan. 2014. *Doing a successful research project using qualitative or quantitative methods* (2nd edition). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Davy, Irene. 2011. "Learners without borders: A curriculum for global citizenship". <http://occ.ibo.org> [Online publication in the IB OCC, IB position paper]. (27 Feb. 2017)
- DeBruin, Jerome. 2010. "Montessori: Help me do it myself". *The Review of Education* 4(2), 139-146.
- Deci, Edward; Ryan, Richard. 1985. *Intrinsic motivation and self-determination in human behavior*. New York, NY: Plenum Press.
- Dion, Chantal. 2011. "Tools to enhance second language writing autonomy: Can we do things better?". In Gardner, David (ed.). *Fostering autonomy in language learning*. Gaziantep: Zirve University, 64-75.
- Dörnyei, Zoltan. 2001. *Motivational strategies in the language classroom*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Doyal, Len. Gough, Ian. 1991. *A theory of human need*. Basingstoke: Macmillan.
- Dweck, Carol. 2016. *Mindset: The new psychology of success*. New York, NY: Ballantine Books.
- Edley, Nigel; Litosseliti, Lia. 2010. "Contemplating interviews and focus groups". In Litosseliti, Lia (ed.). *Research methods in linguistics*. London & New York, NY: Bloomsbury, 155-179.
- Eidse, Faith; Sichel, Nina. 2004. "Introduction". In Eidse, Faith; Sichel, Nina (eds.). *Unrooted childhoods: Memoirs of growing up global*. London & Yarmouth, ME: Nicholas Brealey Publishing, 1-16.
- Ellison, Linda; Brent, Davies. 1993. *Market research in schools*. Research paper: Leeds Metropolitan University.
- European Commission. 2001. *Making a European area of lifelong learning a reality*. Brussels: European Commission.
- Fleming, Neil; Mills, Colleen. 1992. "Not another inventory, rather a catalyst for reflection". *To Improve the Academy* 11: 137-155.
- Fleming, Neil. 2012. *Teaching and learning styles: VARK strategies*. E-Book. <http://vark-learn.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/VARK-Teaching-and-Learning-Styles.pdf> (7 May 2017).

- Flick, Uwe. 2009. *An introduction to qualitative research*. (eth edition). London: Sage.
- Hager, Paul. 2011. "Concepts and definitions of lifelong learning". In London, Manuel (ed.). *The Oxford handbook of lifelong learning*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 12-25.
- Hardman, John. 2001. "Improving recruitment and retention of quality overseas teachers". In Blandford, Sonia; Shaw, Marian (eds.). *Managing international schools*. London: Routledge Falmer, 123-135.
- Hare, John. 2010. "Holistic education: An interpretation for teachers in the IB programmes". <http://occ.ibo.org> [Online publication in the IB OCC, IB position paper]. (27 Feb. 2017).
- Hattie, John. 2012. *Visible learning for teachers: Maximizing impact on learning*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Hattie, John. 2003. "Teachers make a difference: What is the research evidence?". Paper presented at the *Building Teacher Quality: What does the research tell us ACER Research Conference*, Melbourne, Australia. Retrieved from http://research.acer.edu.au/research_conference_2003/4/. (27 Apr. 2017).
- Hayden, Mary. 2006. *Introduction to international education: International schools and their communities*. London: SAGE.
- Hill, Ian; Saxton, Susan. 2014. "The International Baccalaureate (IB) Programme: An international gateway to higher education and beyond". *Higher Learning Research Communications* 4(3), 42-52.
- Holec, Henri. 1979. *Autonomy and foreign language learning*. Strasbourg: Council for Cultural Cooperation.
- Holec, Henri. 1981. *Autonomy and foreign language learning*. Oxford: Pergamon.
- Holt, Lila; Brockett, Ralph. 2012. "Self-direction and factors influencing technology use: Examining the relationships for the 21st century workplace". *Computers in Human Behavior* 28(2012): 2075-2082.
- Hutchings, Bill. 2006. "Principles of Enquiry-Based Learning". Centre for Excellence in Enquiry-Based Learning. The University of Manchester (Online Resources). <http://www.ceebl.manchester.ac.uk/resources/papers/ceeblgr002.pdf> (06 Apr. 2017).
- IBO. "A learning story about the role of the mathematics teacher as a language teacher". <http://occ.ibo.org> [Online publication in the IB OCC]. n.d.a (27 Feb. 2017).
- IBO. *IB examination results 1971-72* [Archival file]. Geneva: International Baccalaureate Archives. n.d.b. (quoted in Hill, Ian; Saxton, Susan. 2014. "The International Baccalaureate (IB) Programme: An international gateway

to higher education and beyond". *Higher Learning Research Communications* 4(3), 42-52.).

- IBO. 2007a. "Extended essay guide: First exams 2013". <http://occ.ibo.org> [Online publication in the IB OCC]. (16 Mar. 2017).
- IBO. 2011a. "Language and learning in IB programmes". <http://occ.ibo.org> [Online publication in the IB OCC]. (27 Feb. 2017).
- IBO. 2012a. "Launch of new programme models: November 2012". <http://occ.ibo.org> [Online publication in the IB OCC]. (21 Mar. 2017).
- IBO. 2013a. "What is an IB education?". <http://occ.ibo.org> [Online publication in the IB OCC]. (27 Feb. 2017).
- IBO. 2013b. "Theory of knowledge guide: First assessment 2015". <http://occ.ibo.org> [Online publication in the IB OCC]. (16 Mar. 2017).
- IBO. 2013c. "IB learner profile review: Report and recommendation (April 2013)". <http://occ.ibo.org> [Online publication in the IB OCC]. (21 Mar. 2017).
- IBO. 2014a. "Financial review 2014". <http://ibo.org/contentassets/9faa0cd4d3eb4c4ab5f239f7342d4547/financial-review-2014-en.pdf> (18 Mar. 2017).
- IBO. 2014b. "Philosophy guide: First assessment 2016". <http://occ.ibo.org> [Online publication in the IB OCC]. (21 Mar. 2017).
- IBO. 2014c. "Programme standards and practices: For use from 1 January 2014". <http://occ.ibo.org> [Online publication in the IB OCC]. (21 Mar. 2017).
- IBO. 2015a. "Creativity, activity, service guide: For students graduating in 2017 and after". <http://occ.ibo.org> [Online publication in the IB OCC]. (16 Mar. 2017).
- IBO. 2016a. "Handbook of procedures for the Diploma Programme 2017". <http://occ.ibo.org> [Online publication in the IB OCC]. (18 Mar. 2017).
- IBO. 2017a. "About the IB". <http://www.ibo.org/about-the-ib/facts-and-figures/> (15 Mar. 2017).
- IBO. 2017b. "Research". <http://www.ibo.org/research/> (15 Mar. 2017).
- IBO. 2017d. "IB Diploma Programme brochure". <http://ibo.org/globalassets/digital-toolkit/brochures/1511-dp-brochure-en.pdf> (18 Mar. 2017).
- IBO. 2017e. "FAQs". <http://www.ibo.org/university-admission/recognition-of-the-ib-diploma-by-countries-and-universities/faqs/> (18 Mar. 2017).
- IBO. 2017f. "The IB teaching style". <http://www.ibo.org/benefits/the-ib-teaching-style/> (21 Mar. 2017).

- IBO. 2017g. "Approaches to teaching and learning in the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Programme". <http://www.ibo.org/globalassets/digital-toolkit/flyers-and-artworks/approaches-to-teaching-learning-dp-en.pdf> (25 Mar 2017).
- IBO. 2017h. "Online PD". <http://ibo.org/professional-development/which-type-of-training-is-right-for-me/online-pd/> (May 11 2017).
- IBO. 2017i. "Diploma programme statistical bulletin". <http://www.ibo.org/about-the-ib/facts-and-figures/statistical-bulletins/diploma-programme-statistical-bulletin/> (May 11 2017).
- IBO. 2017j. "Logos and programme models". <http://ibo.org/digital-toolkit/logos-and-programme-models/> (May 11 2017).
- Illeris, Knud. 2006. "What is special about adult learning?". In Sutherland, Peter; Crowther, Jim (eds.). *Lifelong learning: Concepts and contexts*. London: Routledge, 15-23.
- Ivanovska, Biljana. 2015. "Learner Autonomy in Foreign Language Education and in Cultural Context". *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences* 180(2015), 352–356.
- Iwaniec, Janina. 2014. "Motivation of pupils from southern Poland to learn English". *System* 45(2014), 67-78.
- King, Chris. 2011. "Fostering self-directed learning through guided tasks and learner reflection". *Studies in Self-Access Learning Journal* 2(4), 257-267.
- Kusuma-Powell, Ochan. 2004. "Multi-lingual, but not making it in international schools". *Journal of Research in International Education* 3(2), 157-172.
- Laal, Marjan. 2011. "Lifelong learning: What does it mean?". *Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences* 28(2011), 470-474.
- Lew, Magdeleine; Schmidt, Henk. 2011. "Self-reflection and academic performance: Is there a relationship?". *Advances in Health Sciences Education* 16(4), 529-545.
- Little, David. 1991. *Learner autonomy 1: Definitions, issues and problems*. Dublin: Authentik.
- Lüftenegger, Marko; Schober, Barbara; von de Schoot, Rens; Wagner, Petra; Finsterwald, Monika; Spiel, Christiane. 2012. "Lifelong learning as a goal: Do autonomy and self-regulation in school result in well prepared pupils?". *Learning and Instruction* 22(2012), 27-36.
- Mackenzie, Peter; Hayden, Mary; Thompson, Jeff. 2001. "The Third Constituency: Parents in international schools". *International Schools Journal* XX(2), 57-64.

- Mackenzie, Peter; Hayden, Mary; Thompson, Jeff. 2003. "Parental priorities in the selection of international schools". *Oxford Review of Education* 29(3), 299-314.
- Mason, Jennifer. 2002. *Qualitative researching* (2nd edition). London: Sage Publications.
- Montessori, Mario. 1976. *Education for human development: Understanding Montessori*. New York, NY: Schocken Books.
- Nette, John. 2000. *Primary age internationally mobile children's sense of belonging and identity: A survey of standard 5 and 6 children at four international independent schools in Botswana*. Unpublished MA in Education dissertation, University of Bath.
- Nguyen, Le Thi Cam; Gu, Yongqi. 2013. "Strategy-based instruction: A learner-focused approach to developing learner autonomy". *Language Teaching Research* 17(1), 9-30.
- Noels, Kimberly; Chaffee, Kathryn; Michalyk, Megan; McEown, Maya. 2014. "Culture, autonomy and the self in language learning". In Cszér, Kata; Magid, Michael. *The impact of self-concept on language learning*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters, 131-154.
- Okumus, Nuray. 2015. "Fostering learner autonomy". *Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences* 199(2015), 85-93.
- Peetsma, Thea; Hascher, Tina; Van der Veen, Ineke; Roede, Ewoud. 2005. "Relations between adolescents' self-evaluations, time perspectives, motivation for school and their achievement in different countries and at different ages". *European Journal of Psychology of Education* 20(3), 209-225.
- Petch, Alison. 1986. "Parents' reasons for changing schools". In Stillman, Andy (ed.). *The Balancing Act of 1980: Parents, politics and education*. Windsor: NFER-Nelson.
- Pollock, David; Van Reken, Ruth. 1999. *The Third Culture Kid experience: Growing up among worlds*. Yarmouth, MA: Intercultural Press.
- Purcell, Rod. 2006. "Lifelong learning in the community: Social action". In Sutherland, Peter; Crowther, Jim (eds.). *Lifelong learning: Concepts and contexts*. London: Routledge, 207-217.
- Ramírez Espinosa, Alexánder. 2015. "Fostering autonomy through syllabus design: A step-by-step guide for success". *HOW* 22(2), 114-134.
- Rashid, Tabassum; Ashgar, Hannan. 2016. "Technology use, self-directed learning, student engagement and academic performance: Examining the interrelations". *Computers in Human Behavior* 63(2016): 604-612.

- Resnik, Julia. 2012. "The denationalization of education and the expansion of the International Baccalaureate". *Comparative Education Review* 56(2), 248-269.
- Ricks, Katy. 2013. "The IB develops the students top universities want". *The Independent*, 20/Feb., <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/education/schools/the-ib-develops-the-students-top-universities-want-8503818.html> (16 Mar 2017).
- Rubie-Davies, Christine. 2015. *Becoming a high expectation teacher: Raising the bar*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Rubin, Joan; Chamot, Anna; Harris, Vee; Anderson, Neil. 2007. "Intervening in the use of strategies". In Cohen, Andrew; Macaro, Ernesto (eds). *Language learner strategies: 30 years of research and practice*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 141-160.
- Ryan, Richard; Deci, Edward. 2000. "Self-determination theory and the facilitation of intrinsic motivation, social development, and well-being". *American Psychologist* 55(1), 68-78.
- Sari, Ihsan; Ekici, Sümmani; Soyer, Fikret; Eskiler, Ersin. 2015. "Does self-confidence link to motivation? A study in field hockey athletes". *Journal of Human Sport and Exercise* 10(1): 24-35.
- Savery, John. 2006. "Overview of problem-based learning: Definitions and distinctions". *The Interdisciplinary Journal of Problem-Based Learning* 1(1), 9-20.
- Schober, Barbara; Lüftenegger, Marko; Wagner, Petra; Finsterwald, Monika; Spiel, Christiane. 2013. "Facilitating lifelong learning in school-age learners: Programs and recommendations". *European Psychologist* 18(2), 114-125.
- Siegel, Dan. 2010. "Refrigerator Sheet". Resource from www.drdansiegel.com. <http://www.drdansiegel.com/pdf/Refrigerator%20Sheet--WBC.pdf> (5 May 2017).
- Siegel, Dan; Bryson, Tina. 2011. *The whole-brain child: 12 revolutionary strategies to nurture your child's developing mind*. New York, NY: Delacorte Press.
- Storti, Craig. 2001. *The art of crossing cultures* (2nd edition). London: Nicholas Brealey.
- Tilke, Anthony. 2011. *The International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme and the school library: Inquiry-based education*. Santa Barbara, CA: Libraries Unlimited.
- Tokuhamma-Espinosa, Tracey. 2003. "Third Culture Kids: A special case for foreign language learning". In Tokuhamma-Espinosa, Tracey (ed.). *The multilingual mind: Issues discussed by, for, and about people living with many languages*. Westport, CT: Praeger, 165-169.

- Trebbi, Turid. 2008. "Freedom – a prerequisite for learner autonomy?: classroom innovation and language teacher education". In Lamb, Terry; Reinders, Hayo (eds.). *Learner and teacher autonomy: concepts, realities, and responses*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 33-46.
- Vallerand, Robert; Reid, Greg. 1984. "On the causal effects of perceived confidence on intrinsic motivation: A test of cognitive evaluation theory". *Journal of Sport Psychology* 6(1): 94-102.
- Weenik, Don. 2008. "Cosmopolitanism as a form of capital: Parents preparing their children for a globalizing world". *Sociology* 42(6), 1089-1106.
- Wiggins, Grant; McTighe, Jay. 2005. *Understanding by Design*. (2nd edition). Alexandria, VA: ASCD.
- Yahya, Saadiah; Ahmad, Erny; Jalil, Kamarularifin. 2010. "The definition and characteristics of ubiquitous learning: A discussion". *International Journal of Education and Development using Information and Communication Technology* 6(1): 117-127.
- Zimmerman, Barry. 1989. "Models of self-regulated learning and academic achievement". In Zimmermann, Barry; Schunk, Dale (eds.). *Self-regulated learning and academic achievement: Theory, research, and practice*. New York: Springer, 1-25.
- Zimmerman, Barry. 2002. "Becoming a self-regulated learner: An overview". *Theory into Practice* 41(2): 64-70.
- Zurich International School. 2017. "Employment at ZIS". <http://www.zis.ch/page.cfm?p=2551> (17 Apr. 2017).

8. APPENDIX

Appendix: Table of Contents

<u>INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTION MARKUP</u>	<u>3</u>
<u>TEACHER INTERVIEWS</u>	<u>5</u>
INTERVIEW GUIDE.....	6
INTERVIEW 0 (PILOT).....	11
INTERVIEW 1	21
INTERVIEW 2	31
INTERVIEW 3	43
INTERVIEW 4	52
LEARNER AUTONOMY DEFINITIONS.....	60
<u>STUDENT INTERVIEWS</u>	<u>62</u>
INTERVIEW GUIDE.....	63
INTERVIEW 1	68
INTERVIEW 2	78
INTERVIEW 3	88
INTERVIEW 4	97
INTERVIEW 5	106
INTERVIEW 6	115
INTERVIEW 7	125
INTERVIEW 8	134
INTERVIEW 9	141
INTERVIEW 10	149
INTERVIEW 11	157
LEARNER AUTONOMY DEFINITIONS.....	167
LEARNER PROFILES HANDOUT.....	170
<u>RESOURCES</u>	<u>171</u>
UNDERSTANDING BY DESIGN® SAMPLE LESSON PLAN.....	172

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTION MARKUP

The spoken text has been transcribed as closely as needed for content analysis. In order to aid comprehension, standard American English spelling, capitalization, and punctuation conventions were used. Punctuation was used sparingly for the sole purpose of making the text more readable. Thus, commas or periods should not be considered short pauses, but only indicate beginnings and ends of thoughts or ideas. Contractions and abbreviations were transcribed exactly the way they were produced by the speaker.

Wrong sentence beginnings, repetitions, “uhms” and similar filled pauses were only transcribed if they were relevant in the context (e.g. if the speaker was not sure about his or her answer and needed some time to think or restructure). Unfilled pauses were marked according to the markup conventions explained in the table below. Suprasegmental phonological features such as intonation, stress, or linking have been omitted to increase readability.

Questions or other interaction spoken by the interviewer are in black ink. Any input spoken by the participant is formatted *in italics and grey ink like this*.

The interview guide was followed as closely as possible. Any question that was asked as originally planned in the guide is preceded by a bullet point and follows the exact same formatting as in the interview guide. Whenever it was not appropriate or suitable to pose a question the way it was originally outlined, the bullet point was removed and the question was raised to the left (i.e. the indentation was removed).

The headings used in the interview guide (e.g. “School & Teacher information”, “Learner Autonomy”, “Learner profiles”, “Language” etc) were not spoken and are only included in the transcript to help visualize the organizational structure of the interview.

The following table is an explanation of all notes that have been added to the transcribed text.

Markup	Meaning
...	short silent pause, approximately 3 seconds or less
(long pause)	long silent pause, approximately 3 to 5 seconds
-	abrupt interruption or abrupt change of speaker
censored	content that has been censored because it entails personal information about the participant
["TEXT"]	notes or additional information; nonverbal actions
[not asked]	places after a question to indicate that question has not been asked

The interview transcription markups follow guidelines used by the following academic institutions and websites:

- **FAVE, University of Pennsylvania**
(http://fave.ling.upenn.edu/downloads/Transcription_guidelines_FAAV.pdf)
- **SmartDocs**
(<http://www.smartdocstranscriptionservices.com.au/how-to/all-you-need-to-know-about-transcription-styles.html>)
- **Style Guidelines, University of Leicester**
(<https://www.le.ac.uk/emoha/howtointerview/summaries.html#style>)

TEACHER INTERVIEWS

Interview Guide

School & Teacher information

First, I would like to start asking you a few questions about your school and your professional background. This is for me to get a better idea of you as an educator, and the setting in which you currently work and have worked in in the past.

Question	Answer
Grade level / age group <i>What grades do you teach? What age group do you teach?</i>	
Subjects <i>What subjects do you teach?</i>	
Curriculum at school <i>What curricula or academic programs does your school offer? (Besides the IB).</i>	
Language of instruction at school <i>What is the language of instruction at your school? Are there any other languages used (besides in foreign language classes)?</i>	
Number of students <i>How many students are enrolled in your school?</i>	
Number of faculty members <i>How many faculty members does your school employ?</i>	
Other staff members <i>How many other staff members does your school employ? For example: any kind of teaching support staff, IT, maintenance, security, kitchen staff etc.</i>	
Facilities & Equipment <i>What kind of facilities does your school offer? What kind of equipment is available at your school and in your classroom? (e.g. projector, laptops, tablets etc)</i>	
Other information about the school (certain programs offered, specializations, school environment etc) <i>Is there anything else you can tell me about your school? Does your school offer any additional programs? Are there any specializations? What is your school environment like? What is it that makes your school unique or different from other schools you have been to?</i>	

Experience at school <i>How long have you been teaching at this school?</i>	
Teaching experience <i>How long have you worked as a teacher?</i> <i>When did you receive your QTS?</i>	
Choice of profession <i>Do you remember why you chose to become a teacher?</i>	
Teacher Training <i>How do you feel about your teacher training? Did you enjoy teacher's college?</i> <i>What are positive things that you can highlight about your training? What are some things about your training that disliked or disapprove of?</i>	
Age <25 25-35 36-45 46-55 56+	
Gender <i>male / female / other</i>	

Learner autonomy

The overall research question of my topic is: "How can learner autonomy be fostered at IB schools that use English as the medium of instruction?". Therefore, I will ask you a few questions about learner autonomy and your teaching philosophy in connection to learner autonomy.

- In your own words, what does "learner autonomy" mean to you?
 - Can you give me a very brief summary of what is meant by the term "learner autonomy"?

- [Interviewer hands participant sheet of definitions on learner autonomy]
 I will show you a list of different characteristics of learner autonomy and I would like you to decide to what extent you agree or disagree with each of the following items. You will be given 4 choices to indicate your agreement: "I strongly agree", "I agree", "I disagree", "I strongly disagree". Please carefully read through each item on your paper and indicate to what extent you agree or disagree.

An autonomous learner is capable of...	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
determining realistic and reachable goals				
selecting appropriate methods and techniques to be used				
monitoring their own learning process				
evaluating the progress of their own learning				
Learner profiles: An autonomous learner is...	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
an active participant in the social processes of learning				
an active interpreter of new information in terms of what she/he already uniquely knows				
intrinsically motivated				
perceives him/herself in control of his/her own decision-making				
takes responsibility for the outcomes of his/her actions				
has confidence in him-/herself				

- Can you please tell me why you chose this/these [point at strongly agree statement(s)] characteristic(s) as good ones? Why do you agree with them?
- Why do you think this/these [point at strongly disagree statement(s)] characteristic(s) are not a good fit as a description of an “autonomous learner”? Why do you disagree with them?
- Do you think you regularly foster autonomy in your classroom?
 - How do you foster autonomy in the classroom? Can you give a concrete example?
 - What kind of materials or resources do you think are suitable for fostering learner autonomy?
 - Think about: classroom displays, handouts, books/library, electronic equipment
 - **IB:** To what extent do you think the **IB** teacher support materials or other materials on the **OCC** (Online Curriculum Centre) promote learner autonomy in your classroom?
- To what extent do you differentiate in your classroom?

- In how far do you think do
 - teachers,
 - parents/the home (cf. SES),
 - peers,
 - the school curriculum (the **IB**)
 - or the school as a whole
 have an impact on a learner's autonomy?

- In your teacher training, can you think of any classes or lecturers that emphasized fostering learner autonomy?
 - Was it covered enough/too much?
 - Should it be covered more/less?
 - **IB**: What about any **IB PD courses** that you took? Can you think of any concrete examples where an IB PD course emphasized learner autonomy?

- To what extent do you think ICT in the classroom may foster autonomous learning?
 - Do you believe that if students have easy access to technology that they also learn more independently? Why / Why not?
 - How do you use technology in your classroom and for what purpose? (Please provide concrete examples)
 - To what extent do you believe do **international schools** aim to promote learner autonomy through the use of ICT in the classroom?
 - Do you believe that at an **IB World School** does more so than a non-IB school?

- To what extent do you believe does freedom (i.e. giving students choices) foster learner autonomy?
 - Do you normally give your students a variety of tasks they can choose from? Why / Why not?
 - If yes, can you give me an example?

Language

Finally, I would like to talk about the language aspect in relation to learner autonomy and your teaching.

- A common statement that can be found in official **IB documents** is the phrase “every teacher is a language teacher”. The IB argues that this is the case because at most **IB World Schools** the students' first language is different from the language of instruction.
 - To what extent do you think does this statement hold true at IB schools?
 - Is this something you agree with? Why or why not?

- In how far does teaching your classes in English influence your teaching?
- How would you describe the language proficiency of your students?
 - Do you think that the way you teach would be significantly different if most of your students' first language were English?
 - To what extent do you pay attention to the language your students use in the classroom and the work they submit?
- For non-English teachers: To what extent do you consider yourself a language teacher (when not teaching a language class)?
- To what extent would you say does teaching your students in a language that is different from their first language constitute a barrier for autonomous learning?
 - Do you think your students could be more autonomous or independent if there wasn't such a language barrier? Why or why not?
- [Only if question has not been answered before]
 What kind of additional resources do you use to help your students when they struggle with language?
 - i.e. How do you scaffold learning in your classroom?
 - (How) do you differentiate in your classroom?

Interview 0 (Pilot)

School & Teacher information

First, I would like to start asking you a few questions about your school and your professional background. This is for me to get a better idea of you as an educator, and the setting in which you currently work and have worked in in the past.

Question	Answer
Grade level / age group <i>What grades do you teach? What age group do you teach?</i>	Year 5, 9-10 years
Subjects <i>What subjects do you teach?</i>	English, geography, history
Curriculum at school <i>What curricula or academic programs does your school offer?</i>	British National Curriculum, Cambridge English
Language of instruction at school <i>What is the language of instruction at your school?</i>	English, Thai as a Second Language, other foreign languages
Size of school <i>Approximately how big is your school?</i>	N/A
Number of students <i>How many students are enrolled in your school?</i>	500-700
Number of faculty members <i>How many faculty members does your school employ?</i>	N/A
Other staff members <i>How many other staff members does your school employ? For example: any kind of teaching support staff, IT, maintenance, security, kitchen staff etc.</i>	No teaching assistants in elementary, only in kindergarten Special needs teacher to whom teachers can send students too
Facilities & Equipment <i>What kind of facilities does your school offer? What kind of equipment is available at your school and in your classroom? (e.g. projector, laptops, tablets etc)</i>	Music rooms, ICT labs, science labs (1x chemistry, 1x biology), canteen (not included)
Other information about the school (certain programs offered, specializations, school environment etc) <i>Is there anything else you can tell me about your school? Does your school offer any additional programs? Are there any specializations? What is your school environment like? What is it that makes your school unique or different from other schools you have been to?</i>	Focus on international mindedness; British exams, GCSEs etc

<p>Experience at school</p> <p><i>How long have you been teaching at this school?</i></p>	<p>Started this year (interview in January, started in August – i.e. approximately 6 months)</p>
<p>Teaching experience</p> <p><i>How long have you worked as a teacher? When did you receive your QTS?</i></p>	<p>6-7 years teaching experience in Cambodia; Summer schools in England; Completed an online MA program about 2 years ago at University of Nottingham</p>
<p>Choice of profession</p> <p><i>Do you remember why you chose to become a teacher?</i></p>	<p>Initially because wanted to travel, as a teacher you can work everywhere in the world; Initially for selfish reasons, pure incident that she fell in love with the job; But very happy now</p>
<p>Teacher Training</p> <p><i>How do you feel about your teacher training? Did you enjoy teacher's college? What are positive things that you can highlight about your training? What are some things about your training that disliked or disapprove of?</i></p>	<p>Studying online was very different, but educational and useful; T is glad that she did it while teaching and when she already had some teaching experience; felt good to read up on the theory behind it and that it matches with own conclusions from classroom experience; Gave her a new confidence in her teaching; Some of the contents seemed a bit outdated, but still useful to see how things evolved; A lot of freedom in terms of choice: she was able to skip areas she wasn't interested in and focus on areas she wanted to develop further</p>
<p>Age</p> <p><25 25-35 36-45 46-55 56+</p>	<p>36-45</p>
<p>Gender</p> <p><i>male / female / other</i></p>	<p>female</p>

Learner autonomy

The overall research question of my topic is: "How can learner autonomy be fostered in a classroom that uses English as the medium of instruction?". Therefore, I will ask you a few questions about learner autonomy and your teaching philosophy in connection to learner autonomy.

- In your own words, what does “learner autonomy” mean to you?
 - Can you give me a very brief summary of what is meant by the term “learner autonomy”?

Ya, ya, that's a good question. I think the ultimate goal of education – and this is quite a big thing but I really believe in it - is for students to become independent and to actually... that learning doesn't stop when they go home for the day or when they leave my classroom, but that they actually take it with them and that they want to learn more and they go home and they really want to continue to learn. Not just in school, but that they continue after school, after they have finished school and move on to university and move on with life. So I think that's kind of my personal goal for them... for them to just like... to have that motivation to continue to learn throughout their whole life.

- [Interviewer hands participant sheet of definitions on learner autonomy]
I will show you a list of different characteristics of learner autonomy and I would like you to decide to what extent you agree or disagree with each of the following items. You will be given 4 choices to indicate your agreement: “I strongly agree”, “I agree”, “I disagree”, “I strongly disagree”. Please carefully read through each item on your paper and indicate to what extent you agree or disagree.

An autonomous learner is capable of...	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
determine realistic and reachable goals	X			
select appropriate methods and techniques to be used	X			
monitor their own learning process	X			
evaluate the progress of their own learning	X			
Learner profiles: An autonomous learner is...	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
an active participant in the social processes of learning		X		
an active interpreter of new information in terms of what she/he already uniquely knows		X		
intrinsically motivated	X			
perceives him/herself in control of his/her own decision-making		X		
takes responsibility for the outcomes of his/her actions	X			
has confidence in him-/herself		X		

- Can you please tell me why you chose this/these [point at strongly agree statement(s)] characteristic(s) as good ones? Why do you agree with them? [not asked]
- Why do you think this/these [point at strongly disagree statement(s)] characteristic(s) are bad ones? Why do you disagree with them? [not asked]

So for the first one you chose “Strongly Agree” for all of them?

Ya, they are all pretty central to being an autonomous learner.

And then for the second one you had “Agree” for most of them and “Strongly Agree” for the others. If you could elaborate on the “Agree” ones please.

Ya... it... depends on what you put in the word ‘social processes’. I think because that’s like a really big word so I think it really depends on what you mean by that.

And then “active interpreter of new information”....

I think.... That one too... I think it’s more about how the question is formulated than actually what it says.

Then “perceives him/herself in control of his/her own decision-making”.

Ya... I think... maybe I misinterpreted the question.... because in the classroom students, they have a certain degree of freedom and space for decision-making when ultimately they probably don’t have that much choice.

Okay, then “has confidence in him-/herself”. So why is that not “Strongly Agree” for you?

I still think it’s important, I’m just not sure of it whether it’s as central as the others.

- How important do you think it is to foster learner autonomy in the classroom?
 - Very Important
 - Important
 - Somewhat important
 - Not important

I think it’s very important and I think maybe especially in Asia because plenty of students, they come from a different background or definitely their parents have a different background where that has not been encouraged. (addressing the interviewer) If you have taught in Asia, you probably would say the same thing. So, I think especially in teaching in this culture you can see that is something that is often lacking and they are quite reliant on the teacher and they cannot wait for the teacher to tell them exactly what to say and how to do things and what to do. So, I think especially there... yes.

- Do you think you regularly foster autonomy in your classroom?
 - How do you foster autonomy in the classroom? Can you give a concrete example?

Ya, I mean For example... obviously in a class you find all kinds of students and some of them are very independent and motivated and just get on with whatever is fun to them and other students who require a lot of help and support... ehm... quite a few students who.... Cannot wait for instructions and ask for more instructions they need as well. At once students would ask me what time it is even though the clock is right at the wall... and... I would never answer a question like that. If it's something they can find out themselves, if it's something simple like that or if it's something that says in the book or something... I will... based on my knowledge of my students... I will give them the support I think they need, but then it's actually up to them to find the answer themselves. I don't spoon-feed students.

- What kind of materials or resources do you think are suitable for fostering learner autonomy?

I... would like to say authentic sources.

Can you explain what you mean by “authentic”?

Ya... I use real life sources, to have the students for example go home and do their research on the internet. I think that is good for autonomy. I don't think that textbooks are all that good. Most textbooks that I have seen don't do very much for independence, for autonomy... But in general, I want my students to see real things... whatever it may be.

- Think about: classroom displays, handouts, books/library, electronic equipment

(laughs). I think... Sorry, what were the examples?

Classroom displays, handouts, the library, electronic equipment –

Ya...I think, uhm... I'm personally very bad with classroom decorations. I think displays are a good thing, I'm just not very good at them myself... Library for sure, I'm very happy to see that my students are very keen learners and they are also very motivated learners. I am very happy to see that. They will actually go home and find out more things, they will find a book at the library and start reading and see how that connects to the lessons. So, definitely a thing that helps well, like everything that they have available around them... as long as they are motivated and they kind of got their eyes open for that kind of information, they will use whatever they can see around them.

Is that something you use regularly? Like the library for instance?

Ya! It's in the schedule.

Oh, so it's in the schedule

Ya, so weekly

So, once a week for an hour, or –

Yea, exactly

- Also: ASAs, school environment and location, field trips

Ya, they are doing field trips. I haven't really thought about how it relates to autonomy. Uhm.. there are after school clubs as well and they are often a bit

more free, a bit more hands-on. It's a variety of music and dance and cycling, there is debate club, there is cooking, there is first-aid, there is like a variety of things. And I think all of those... contribute to autonomy ... and it's more like out of school skills and knowledge, compared to the normal school subjects.

- In how far do
 - teachers,
 - parents/the home (cf. SES),
 - peers, or the school as a whole

have an impact on a learner's autonomy?

Yea.. I think... I would say parents and teachers have the most importance. I'm sure peers have as well, but it kind of... at least inside the classroom it comes down to the atmosphere or the expectations that you set as a teacher. And I think it's clear... It's often very obvious and clear to see ... when you get a class in the beginning of the school year who might have been with different teachers in the year before, you kind of can tell what that teacher has given to those students in terms of what they expect in independence, and classroom habits, attitudes, and so on. So I can definitely tell the difference if this is a teacher who has demanded of the students to be independent and to take responsibility for their learning or if it has been a teacher who has been a bit more traditional about it in that sense. I can definitely see that. And I think it's definitely very clear to see. You can tell when you meet parents, you can often learn something about the students as well, where their attitudes are coming from and where they get their ideas from. So I think, in that sense it is important to work with the parents as well and hopefully get them to see things from a new perspective too.

What about the school as a whole? Is it not just the teachers, not just individual aspects, but –

Uh... Yea, for sure. And I mean it comes down to maybe school policies and so on as well and I think if you look at any international school and you look at the mission and the vision and school- and learner outcomes and so on you will have those aspects as well. But then it probably varies how those are implemented and it can come down to individual teachers as well, like how well that actually comes true in the classroom.

Since you mentioned school policies, can you think of any examples at your school and your school policies?

I was going to bring our school-wide learner outcomes but I completely forgot about it. But I think... because when you messaged me you were talking about curriculum, but I think if you are really looking for the statements and the documents where they are talking about learner autonomy, I think the school-wide learner outcomes is probably where you find it more well expressed because that's where you have all of that about lifelong learning, and creativity, and teamwork and all of those values more and I think this comes into that as well.

- In your teacher training, can you think of any classes or lecturers that emphasized fostering learner autonomy?

I didn't really have classes or lectures, learning online. (long pause) I'm sure it touched on it, but I couldn't give you examples.

- Was it covered enough/too much?
- Should it be covered more/less?

I think it was covered enough... or maybe I had that like attitude with me beforehand. Maybe it varies like what background you have and how long you have been teaching for and how you feel towards it anyway

- To what extent do you think does learner autonomy correlate with intelligence?
 - i.e. Do you believe that a smart student is also an autonomous student?

Not necessarily, but of course, a student who... who doesn't have any difficulties keeping up with the lessons will have it so much easier to work independently than a student who struggles to keep up. A student who has difficulty understanding the lessons, maybe they are super autonomous, but maybe their work will be a very low quality because they didn't understand the content or something like that. So... What do you mean by 'intelligence' by the way because that kind of interests me. (laughs)

Well, you often have gifted students who are in a gifted program, do you think those students often tend to be more autonomous?

Yea, I would say so because... it takes less for them to kind of grasp the lesson content and to kind of grasp what I am trying to convey to them and other sources as well of course, not just me. So I think they kind of have a head start towards autonomy, compared to students who are further behind and need more support to understand the lesson content and the curriculum.

- To what extent do you think may or may not ICT in the classroom foster autonomous learning?

I think it does, but I don't think it's like a quick fix. I don't think that just because you have like computer labs or computers and projectors, it doesn't do it automatically, it depends on what you do with it and how you use it. But it definitely helps. I think it does.

- Do you believe that if students have easy access to technology that they also learn more independently? Why / Why not?

I think it might, depending on how you use it. I know if you put my students in front of computers, they may just like google Pokémons which doesn't really help, does it? But with right guidance, I use Google Classroom quite a lot. So, whatever I use in class, I normally, at the end of the day, post it on Google Classroom which all the students have access to through their school email accounts and... the students, they can download the materials we have used. If I have links to other websites or to other games or other documents that maybe I didn't have time, maybe I want to just add some extra material for them. They do actually go home, they do read this, they comment on it, they come back and discuss it the next day and for me that is one way I use ICT for the students.

- How do you use technology in your classroom and for what purpose?
(Please provide concrete examples)
[not asked because already answered]
- To what extent do you believe does freedom (i.e. giving students choices) foster learner autonomy?

I think that's important ... because obviously that is a skill you need as well as an independent learner and ... normal human being as well, to be able to make your decisions and support your decisions. I think that is a really important skill for them to learn.

- Do you normally give your students a variety of tasks they can choose from?
Why / Why not?

I try to, depending on what I do. I try to differentiate my task depending on level. I would give my students... I know some teachers, when they differentiate, they kind of like hand out, like you are Level 1 here is for you and you are Level 2 have this one. I wouldn't do that because when it comes to meta-cognition, it comes back to independence and autonomy as well. I would normally say this is the easy one, this is the more difficult one. Have a look and see which one is best for you and which one for you is a bit of a challenge for you. So I kind of want them to set their own goals and to know themselves and to know their own learning. And hopefully that is the right approach to kind of challenge themselves and to control... you know, to control their own learning too.

- If yes, can you give me an example?

You mentioned that you have sometimes tasks where you say "this is an easy one, this is a more difficult one". What would be an example for that?

Quite often if it comes to reading for example. ... We were reading news articles the other day for example. And there are websites where you can get the same news story, but for different levels. So, just on the same page, I had given them two versions of the same news story. So, no matter which one they chose, they would get the same content out of it. But they could choose which level is best for them.

May I ask what page that is?

Breaking News English (laughs) ... It's a classic.

Language

Finally, I would like to talk about the language aspect in relation to learner autonomy and your teaching.

- In how far does teaching your classes in English have an effect on your teaching?

For me or for the students?

Well, your students are probably not English native speakers, I guess?
Ya, ya.

How does that affect your teaching?

Ya... obviously you will have like a range... in any international school in a class with like non-native speakers you will have a range of learners. Most of my students have got been to international schools since kindergarten and they are quite fluent but you can tell when it comes to vocabulary or when it comes to writing skills, productive skills, there is a difference. (long pause) I have forgotten the question. Did I answer the questions?

Yea well, is there anything you find challenging about that?

That is always going to be challenging. Also, because you have standards and curricula goals to live up to and you have students who are quite far away from reaching those goals. And also with the sheer of variety of languages in the class, there is always going to be a challenge as well and that kind of comes back to differentiation as well and... There is only so much you can do, but in the end you do what you can to just meet you students' level of English.

- How would you describe the language proficiency of your students?
[not asked because already answered]
 - Do you think that the way you teach would be significantly different if most of your students' first language were English?

Not really because I would imagine that even ... or I know that even native speakers would need to practice often the same skills as well. Just because you are a native speaker doesn't mean that you have that vocabulary or that you have those writing skills, or you have the grammar, for example. (long pause) It may help, but it may not be that much of a difference anyway, so I think you just have to know your students. You will have high and low level learners no matter what you got.

- For non-English teachers: Do you also consider yourself a language teacher when not teaching a language class?
[not asked because doesn't apply]
 - To what extent do you pay attention to the language your students use in the classroom and the work they submit?
[not asked because already answered]
- To what extent do you encourage your students to work on their language skills?
 - How do you do this? Can you give an example?

Especially with the weaker ones.

Ya, I got a few students... Some more students have extra language support in the afternoon. So they have extra English classes afterwards to kind of go through what they have done again. And I've got other students who I give extra reading activities, I send it home to them, I know that they are working on it with their parents at home to practice more extra English. Ehm.. What else do I do? I

try to kind of incorporate English language skills in all subjects. We do a lot of reading comprehension in geography and history as well. I try to use all four skills no matter what it is. If I find video clips or sound clips that kind of works... So it's just about practicing those language skills no matter what the topic or the subject is.

When you give them additional assignments for at home, how do the students feel about that?

(laughs)

Is that something they appreciate or is that something they feel like... it is a punishment?

It varies for the students and kind of with the parents' attitude as well. And the relationship between the students and the parents. You can kind of tell who likes it or who doesn't. Sometimes it's the parents who feel more that it's necessary than the students. At times the students kind of... they know what they need and the goal and they are willing to work together. So, surprisingly enough, they are positive about it and I think it's a matter of finding tasks that don't feel like a chore and is actually interesting and important for the students. So don't give them boring work. This boy who I am giving extra reading to, I know his personal interests, so I try to find texts and activities that kind of fit into his interests.

- What kind of additional resources do you use to help your students when they struggle with language?
 - i.e. How do you scaffold learning in your classroom?
 - (How) do you differentiate in your classroom?

[not asked because already answered]

So that was it... so for the end I have a very short written questionnaire for you.
(hands questionnaire to teacher)

(teacher starts completing questionnaire a final questionnaire)
(teacher finishes and hands it over)

Okay that was it, thank you so much!

[informal conversation followed after this in which participant gave feedback on the interview]

Interview 1

School & Teacher information

First, I would like to start asking you a few questions about your school and your professional background. This is for me to get a better idea of you as an educator, and the setting in which you currently work and have worked in in the past.

Question	Answer
Grade level / age group <i>What grades do you teach? What age group do you teach?</i>	Psychology: DP, ages 16-18 Math: key stage 3-5, ages 11-18
Subjects <i>What subjects do you teach?</i>	IB Psychology, Math (British curriculum)
Curriculum at school <i>What curricula or academic programs does your school offer? (Besides the IB).</i>	English National Curriculum for key stages 1-3, IGCSE for key stage 4, IB for key stage 5
Language of instruction at school <i>What is the language of instruction at your school? Are there any other languages used (besides in foreign language classes)?</i>	English
Number of students <i>How many students are enrolled in your school?</i>	N/A
Number of faculty members <i>How many faculty members does your school employ?</i>	Approximately 40-50
Other staff members <i>How many other staff members does your school employ? For example: any kind of teaching support staff, IT, maintenance, security, kitchen staff etc.</i>	1 Special Ed, 1 Round Square Coordinator, 1 School Counsellor; many teachers also have coordinator responsibilities
Facilities & Equipment <i>What kind of facilities does your school offer? What kind of equipment is available at your school and in your classroom? (e.g. projector, laptops, tablets etc)</i>	Computer, projector, whiteboard in each classroom; bring your own device policy; 2 ICT rooms, music room, art room, swimming pool, football pitch, basketball court

<p>Other information about the school (certain programs offered, specializations, school environment etc)</p> <p><i>Is there anything else you can tell me about your school? Does your school offer any additional programs? Are there any specializations? What is your school environment like? What is it that makes your school unique or different from other schools you have been to?</i></p>	<p>The school is a member of the Round Square Organization (which emphasizes character education; students go on international conferences where they plan how to implement round square at the school, round square weeks every year); every year group goes on educational trips; Students are encouraged to do various fundraising activities</p>
<p>Experience at school</p> <p><i>How long have you been teaching at this school?</i></p>	<p>4 years</p>
<p>Teaching experience</p> <p><i>How long have you worked as a teacher? When did you receive your QTS?</i></p>	<p>6 years</p>
<p>Choice of profession</p> <p><i>Do you remember why you chose to become a teacher?</i></p>	<p>Opportunity to travel, live abroad, see different cultures; another chance to have an impact on other people, help be a part of their education, inspire them to continue studying my subject [psychology and math]</p>
<p>Teacher Training</p> <p><i>How do you feel about your teacher training? Did you enjoy teacher's college? What are positive things that you can highlight about your training? What are some things about your training that disliked or disapprove of?</i></p>	<p>9-month course, out of which 7 months were classroom based (took various courses on philosophy of education and different issues around education), 2 months were supervised teaching experience in a [censored]-area school; practical experience was most useful because lots of feedback on your teaching; classroom component was interesting, but did not have much practical benefit for teaching</p>
<p>Age</p> <p><25 25-35 36-45 46-55 56+</p>	<p>25-35</p>
<p>Gender</p> <p><i>male / female / other</i></p>	<p>male</p>

Learner autonomy

The overall research question of my topic is: “How can learner autonomy be fostered at IB schools that use English as the medium of instruction?”. Therefore, I will ask you a few questions about learner autonomy and your teaching philosophy in connection to learner autonomy.

- In your own words, what does “learner autonomy” mean to you?
 - Can you give me a very brief summary of what is meant by the term “learner autonomy”?

To me learner autonomy means that students are more self-directed, they are in charge of their learning, they are not just responding to explicit instructions given by their teacher, but they have the space to ... self-regulate and to make their own decisions with respect to their education.

- [Interviewer hands participant sheet of definitions on learner autonomy]
I will show you a list of different characteristics of learner autonomy and I would like you to decide to what extent you agree or disagree with each of the following items. You will be given 4 choices to indicate your agreement: “I strongly agree”, “I agree”, “I disagree”, “I strongly disagree”. Please carefully read through each item on your paper and indicate to what extent you agree or disagree.

An autonomous learner is capable of...	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
determining realistic and reachable goals		X		
selecting appropriate methods and techniques to be used		X		
monitoring their own learning process		X		
evaluating the progress of their own learning		X		
Learner profiles: An autonomous learner is...	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
an active participant in the social processes of learning	X			
an active interpreter of new information in terms of what she/he already uniquely knows	X			
intrinsically motivated	X			
perceives him/herself in control of his/her own decision-making	X			
takes responsibility for the outcomes of his/her actions	X			
has confidence in him-/herself		X		

- Can you please tell me why you chose this/these [point at strongly agree statement(s)] characteristic(s) as good ones? Why do you agree with them?
- Why do you think this/these [point at strongly disagree statement(s)] characteristic(s) are not a good fit as a description of an “autonomous learner”? Why do you disagree with them?

The first sections seems to be about the goal setting and self-evaluation. And this here [points at ‘determining realistic and reachable goals’], this is something that I have tried to focus on. So, in my psychology class, at the beginning of each unit, I get students to set goals for what grade they want to get in the unit and also to outline a plan in terms of what kinds of strategies they will be using. So, it could be things like ... you know, revising a certain amount of time every day, or meeting with your study partner on a regular basis. And at the end of the unit, once they get their results, they compare the results to their goal and see if they have met their goal or not and try to reflect on that. And I think it’s a useful strategy because I think that students feel a lot more motivated to work towards the goal when it’s their goal. So, rather than having a parent or a teacher tell them ‘I want you to get an A on the next test’, which is a form of control, this instead... it’s students deciding for themselves what they want to get. And by doing so, it increases intrinsic motivation to the task. So the second statement to me is more concerned with the role of the student in each lesson and I think it’s about viewing students as as coming into the lesson with their own personalities, their own approaches to learning, their own previous knowledge, rather than just seeing them as a passive vessel that you are supposed to just pour knowledge into. So, in psychology... like a lot of the topics that we study are things that students will have already had experience with them in their lives. For instance, when we learn about conformity, this is something students have already experienced in their social life, they have probably been in situations where they have felt peer pressure to conform, or family pressure to conform. So, I think that it’s very useful to give students the opportunity to bring in what they have experienced and already know about the topic and not me giving them my take on conformity, but hear their take on conformity.

- Do you think you regularly foster autonomy in your classroom?

It’s a matter of degree. Fostering autonomy to the extent possible is always useful, but I think that there still has to be some structure. There is a set curriculum to follow. So, for instance, if a student comes to class and says ‘You know teacher, I really want to learn the psychology of serial killers’ for instance, then it might not always be possible to completely change the focus of the lesson. But I think that even within a fixed curriculum, there is a lot of room to increase autonomy. Could be things like autonomous goal setting, also within a topic there are a lot of choices of what research to focus on, how to evaluate that research, how to synthesize it with other pieces of research ... So, I think it’s a matter of degree. I think that teachers do have to set a structure for class, but within that structure, there is certainly room for autonomy.

- How do you foster autonomy in the classroom? Can you give a concrete example?
- What kind of materials or resources do you think are suitable for fostering learner autonomy?
 - Think about: classroom displays, handouts, books/library, electronic equipment
[not asked]

I think that looking at some of these items that are characterized by learner autonomy [points at Learner Characteristics sheet], I think that some of the ways that foster autonomy are through things like having classroom activities that are less structured. So, for instance, a class discussion is far less structured than answering a series of questions because when you answer a series of questions, there is very specific answer you have to write and there is a clear right or wrong answer. But when you are fostering a discussion, there is flexibility in that discussion. So, if the discussion topic is, for instance, 'Talk about a time where you felt pressure to conform'. So, that's a very broad topic and students can choose many different ways to answer that. They could talk about a time where they felt pressure to conform in school, or from their parents, from their teachers. There is a lot of autonomy on how to approach that. Other ways to foster autonomy are ways that include assignments in projects that have flexibility built in. So, for instance, one student could do an assignment on a Powerpoint, or someone can choose a Prezi to show the same information. So you could have autonomy in that sense. You can also give students autonomy in the sense of how to revise. What methods are more effective for them. So some students might prefer flash cards and that's the most effective way for them. Other students might prefer to study in groups and they really enjoy the social dynamic. So, that's another way you can foster autonomy. So, I think, in general, classroom activities ... it can really range from a very tightly controlled, and a very tightly controlled activity would be multiple choice. You got a question, A, B, C, D, E, circle an answer and that's it. There is very little room for autonomy in that situation. All the way to the other extreme where you could give students a lot of choice and a lot of flexibility in how they build on their knowledge and express their knowledge. So, I think that to some extent the more flexible and less structured the activities, the more challenging for the students because they don't have explicit instructions on how to get about it. They have to come up with their own ideas. So I think that to the extent possible, that should be encouraged or built up to that point.

Do you have any specific resources that you use to foster learner autonomy?
This does not necessarily have to be something physical, this could also be something online that you put on the learning platform.

I use a goal-setting worksheet and a reflection worksheet which relates to the aspects of autonomy of the goal-setting. I think that the fact that I have all the course materials online supports autonomy because students can use those materials to revise however they need it. They can make notes in class or they can make fewer notes in class or they can go home and make more notes at home using the resources online. And journals I have students write journals that involve making connections between personal experiences and the course. So that relates to the aspect of autonomy on building on previous knowledge. So those are some things that come to mind.

- **IB:** To what extent do you think the **IB** teacher support materials or other materials on the **OCC** (Online Curriculum Centre) promote learner autonomy in your classroom?
[not asked]

- To what extent do you differentiate in your classroom?

I think that the way the IB assessment framework is set up, there is quite a bit of room for differentiation based on student interest. So, for instance in psychology, students have a choice of essays to write in their final exam. So, typically, there is always a biological, cognitive, and socio-cultural essay and they choose one to respond to. Because of that it allows some differentiation in terms of which group of analysis students are most interested in because they can then revise that to a greater degree. Differentiation can also be accomplished though providing students with more examples of research and then they can choose which research studies they find most useful or effective. As far as the classroom experience itself, I think usually more able students are more autonomy seeking or they benefit more from autonomy, whereas some students might actually need more structure. So, I think that when it comes to doing activities in a class or setting assignments, one way to differentiate is to give students a very structured option, so they can follow this very structured option if they choose to or they can come up with their own ideas. So rather than saying 'everyone has to follow exactly the way I want to do it' or 'everyone has to come up with their own ideas', you can do both. You can say, 'you know, either follow these very specific instructions, or if you want to come up with your own approach'. And then that way, I think what will tend to happen is that students who don't have the confidence or they don't have the expertise to come up with their own approach, they can still fall back on those instructions.

- In how far do you think do
 - teachers,
 - parents/the home (cf. SES),
 - peers,
 - the school curriculum (the **IB**)
 - or the school as a whole

have an impact on a learner's autonomy?

I think that in all honesty, autonomy is not a concept that has gotten a lot of attention at the school. I think that from a parental point of view ... Most of our parents are Asians ... and I think that traditionally, Asian education has placed a little less value on autonomy; they place more value on traditional teacher-centered education. So, I don't think that parents necessarily expect or demand teachers to give autonomy to students. In fact, some parents might even regard those methods with perplexity or even confusion because they expect teachers to be leading the classroom. As far as the school is concerned, I think that personally one of the threats to autonomy is when teachers feel a lot of pressure to produce certain exam results. I think under those conditions, teachers feel that they have to really take over the reins because they want to produce students

who get good results and they may not have faith to let go of the power. And I think the irony is that, I think, if you give students autonomy in the right way, it's not going to have any negative effect on the results. In fact, I think it might even have a positive effect on the results. But at the same time I think that people, teachers, naturally get nervous if they feel that they are going to be judged harshly if students don't perform well and they might be very hesitant to let students be in charge of their own learning when they feel that they will become responsible for it.

- In your teacher training, can you think of any classes or lecturers that emphasized fostering learner autonomy?
 - Was it covered enough/too much?
 - Should it be covered more/less?

I don't think that autonomy was something that was particularly stressed in my teacher education, but differentiation was. We were taught quite a lot about letting students approach the same material in different ways. So, for instance, one student could have the choice to write an essay about a topic, whereas another student could express the same knowledge in a presentation, or a speech, or even like a class performance or something. That was all discussed under the umbrella of differentiation, but it all also clearly has strong links to autonomy as well.

- **IB:** What about any **IB PD courses** that you took? Can you think of any concrete examples where an IB PD course emphasized learner autonomy?

I have only taken one IB course. That was the category one in psychology. I did the online version of it. And category one is meant primarily just to introduce the teacher to the course, the syllabus, the assessments and so on. So, it doesn't really get into the classroom strategies. It's more of an introductory course to get teacher up to speed with the curriculum.

- To what extent do you think ICT in the classroom may foster autonomous learning?
 - Do you believe that if students have easy access to technology that they also learn more independently? Why / Why not?

[not asked]

Oh, I think it makes a huge difference because ... teachers are the ones with all the knowledge and students are dependent upon teachers to provide them with that knowledge. If the student has a laptop or even just a phone with internet access, they have access to pretty much the entire knowledge that has been compiled since the beginning of time on the other device. So, with that sort of access, it allows students to take control of their own learning. They can look up a research study, for instance. They can investigate what a particular neurotransmitter does. So, I think giving the students access to the internet, to all of the information and knowledge that's available online, can really support autonomy.

- How do you use technology in your classroom and for what purpose?
(Please provide concrete examples)

I use technology in a number of different ways. It can be used to direct students to a particular resource online. So, you can direct them to an online questionnaire, or a news article. I certainly use technology a lot in the materials I develop for my students. So, my lessons incorporate videos, Powerpoint presentations, and so on. It can also be used for student-centered research. So, you can give students a topic and tell them to research it on their device. And it can also be used by students as a way of demonstrating their knowledge. So, they can use technology to create a presentation, or make an online quiz.

- To what extent do you believe do **international schools** aim to promote learner autonomy through the use of ICT in the classroom?
 - Do you believe that at an **IB World School** does more so than a non-IB school?

I think that nowadays if you are ... (long pause) I don't really know if there is anything specifically IB about using technology. I can't really think of anything specifically in the IB program or the IB documents that say, you know, 'This is how you should be using technology'. I think nowadays any educator who is familiar with these tools and has access to them at school is going to use them because it only enhances the classroom experience and the materials. And I think that's true for teachers whether they are in an IB school or non-IB school. I think the only reason why teachers wouldn't use technology is because they just are not that comfortable with it themselves or they just don't have access to it because the school doesn't have a computer in the classroom. But otherwise I can't really imagine teachers not making use of technology because especially in the social sciences it is really something that enhances learning. I can't even imagine what it would be like to teach psychology by writing stuff on a blackboard. The idea is just completely alien to me.

- To what extent do you believe does freedom (i.e. giving students choices) foster learner autonomy?
 - Do you normally give your students a variety of tasks they can choose from? Why / Why not?
 - If yes, can you give me an example?

I think that ... to the extent possible, yes. I mean, there is a certain curriculum that has to be followed, but there is lots of opportunity for choice within that. So, for instance, a learning objective might to look at the effect of a hormone on behavior. But students could choose any particular hormone that they are interested in and they want to research. So even though I might focus on one or two hormones in the class, they have the opportunity to do their own research on a different hormone if they are interested in that.

Language

Finally, I would like to talk about the language aspect in relation to learner autonomy and your teaching.

- A common statement that can be found in official **IB documents** is the phrase “every teacher is a language teacher”. The IB argues that this is the case because at most **IB World Schools** the students’ first language is different from the language of instruction.
 - To what extent do you think this statement holds true at IB schools?
 - Is this something you agree with? Why or why not?

Ah, totally, yea! I think that, first of all, if you are a native English speaker, if you are studying psychology, there is a lot of subject-specific terminology you wouldn’t know. So, for instance, I am talking about things like ‘normative conformity’, for instance. So, someone who is a native English speaker but never sat in a psychology course before probably doesn’t know what that means. Or, say for instance, even something simple like a ‘controlled variable’ or a ‘demand characteristic’. These are all subject-specific vocabulary that most people would not be aware of regardless of their language proficiency. So, definitely a goal of teaching any subject is to expand the students’ vocabulary to make them feel confident using this subject-specific language. That’s even more important for students whose native language isn’t English because obviously they don’t know a lot of the subject-specific words that nobody would know but they also might not know a lot of terms that a native English speaker would. So, for instance, when I was teaching bulimia, some students didn’t know what the words ‘purging vomiting’ meant. Probably most native speakers would know. So, I think, most certainly a goal of the course, among other goals for students to have is a much richer vocabulary by the end of the course.

- In how far does teaching your classes in English influence your teaching?
[not asked]
- How would you describe the language proficiency of your students?
 - Do you think that the way you teach would be significantly different if most of your students’ first language were English?

I’d say that the language proficiency varies from near-native level, so practically fluent, probably down to upper-intermediate. I’d say that with respect to how it affects my teaching, I think that just knowing how students who may not be as confident in English ... it forces me to be more consciously with the language I use in the class. So, trying to use clear and simple language whenever possible to explain more difficult terms. Just being aware to speak at a reasonable pace, to avoid certain expressions that might be common to native speakers but non-native speakers may not be familiar with. So, it does make a degree of difference, yes.

- To what extent do you pay attention to the language your students use in the classroom and the work they submit?

Oh, well. So, the work that students submit is primarily essay, it’s an essay-based course. So, certainly I am aware of students’ level of English through their work.

Certainly, it's a more challenging course for students who are less proficient in English because they have to ... they struggle a bit more with expressing themselves effectively.

- For non-English teachers: To what extent do you consider yourself a language teacher (when not teaching a language class)?
[not asked]
- To what extent would you say does teaching your students in a language that is different from their first language constitute a barrier for autonomous learning?
 - Do you think your students could be more autonomous or independent if there wasn't such a language barrier? Why or why not?

I think that it could be. Part of autonomy could fall on self-directed research and a student who is struggling to read articles online that are written for a scientific audience ... So, that could perhaps hinder the autonomy. Or they just don't feel confident navigating the internet because it's all in English and they find it difficult to find what they need. It might certainly lower their confidence with respect to being self-directed researchers.

- [Only if question has not been answered before]
What kind of additional resources do you use to help your students when they struggle with language?
 - i.e. How do you scaffold learning in your classroom?
 - (How) do you differentiate in your classroom?

I think giving clear definitions of terms during lessons both verbally and in writing is important. And, you know, language is something takes quite a while to develop proficiency in it. It's not something that, you know, ... if a student comes into class with a relatively weak level of English, it's not something they can fix overnight. But it's something that will improve substantially over the two years of the Diploma Programme.

Interview 2

School & Teacher information

First, I would like to start asking you a few questions about your school and your professional background. This is for me to get a better idea of you as an educator, and the setting in which you currently work and have worked in in the past.

Question	Answer
Grade level / age group <i>What grades do you teach? What age group do you teach?</i>	Year 6, ages 10-11
Subjects <i>What subjects do you teach?</i>	Whole curriculum, no IB subjects
Curriculum at school <i>What curricula or academic programs does your school offer? (Besides the IB).</i>	British National Curriculum for key stages 1-4, IBDP for last 2 years
Language of instruction at school <i>What is the language of instruction at your school? Are there any other languages used (besides in foreign language classes)?</i>	English
Number of students <i>How many students are enrolled in your school?</i>	Approximately 2400
Number of faculty members <i>How many faculty members does your school employ?</i>	N/A
Other staff members <i>How many other staff members does your school employ? For example: any kind of teaching support staff, IT, maintenance, security, kitchen staff etc.</i>	EAL specialist for every year group + EAL facilitators for each EAL specialist (sometimes separated, sometimes in the classroom as shadow teachers); several assistants for teachers; ICT specialist; sport instructors, kitchen, maintenance, security
Facilities & Equipment <i>What kind of facilities does your school offer?</i> <i>What kind of equipment is available at your school and in your classroom? (e.g. projector, laptops, tablets etc)</i>	10 tennis courts, 8 football pitches, 2 swimming pools, display boards (learning resources, what the teacher currently teaches), projectors, smartboards, students bring own laptop from year 5 onwards, various laptops also provided by the school

Other information about the school (certain programs offered, specializations, school environment etc) <i>Is there anything else you can tell me about your school? Does your school offer any additional programs? Are there any specializations? What is your school environment like? What is it that makes your school unique or different from other schools you have been to?</i>	School puts huge emphasis on having a growth mindset; developing the whole child, not based on academics at all; many students miss academic lessons in favor of e.g. music or sports lessons; very holistic approach; emphasis on being a global learner; lots of school counsellors and staff counsellors;
Experience at school <i>How long have you been teaching at this school?</i>	2 years
Teaching experience <i>How long have you worked as a teacher? When did you receive your QTS?</i>	4 years
Choice of profession <i>Do you remember why you chose to become a teacher?</i>	Career change from criminal law to teaching
Teacher Training <i>How do you feel about your teacher training? Did you enjoy teacher's college? What are positive things that you can highlight about your training? What are some things about your training that disliked or disapprove of?</i>	Trained in the UK; first 2 years of working in London as a teacher were awful because the training didn't prepare you for the classroom; not much positive to say about UK training; not enough math instruction for primary teachers;
Age <25 25-35 36-45 46-55 56+	25-35
Gender <i>male / female / other</i>	male

Learner autonomy

The overall research question of my topic is: "How can learner autonomy be fostered at IB schools that use English as the medium of instruction?". Therefore, I will ask you a few questions about learner autonomy and your teaching philosophy in connection to learner autonomy.

- In your own words, what does "learner autonomy" mean to you?
 - Can you give me a very brief summary of what is meant by the term "learner autonomy"?

You know, I have come across that term in my training and I feel really bad now because I can't explain to you now in my own words what it means. What does it mean?

Well, there are several closely related concepts to it, maybe you are familiar with terms such as “self-directed learning” –

Oh oh okay. So that’s probably related to developing assessment-capable learners?

Uhm, can you explain what exactly you mean by that?

So, an assessment-capable learner is somebody that understands the learning journey that they are going to take, they understand the steps they are going to take, and as they are on this learning journey, they know where they are. They know their steps and they know their next steps.

Oh okay okay. Is this now something from your teacher training or from *censored*[name of school]?

*This is *censored*[name of school]. We want to produce assessment-capable learners. The teachers don’t tell them what their next steps are, so students always need to know themselves ‘What are your next steps?’ and that’s a huge thing in every classroom.*

Yea, that is very similar actually.

- [Interviewer hands participant sheet of definitions on learner autonomy]
I will show you a list of different characteristics of learner autonomy and I would like you to decide to what extent you agree or disagree with each of the following items. You will be given 4 choices to indicate your agreement: “I strongly agree”, “I agree”, “I disagree”, “I strongly disagree”. Please carefully read through each item on your paper and indicate to what extent you agree or disagree.

An autonomous learner is capable of...	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
determining realistic and reachable goals		X		
selecting appropriate methods and techniques to be used		X		
monitoring their own learning process	X			
evaluating the progress of their own learning	X			

Learner profiles: An autonomous learner is...	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
an active participant in the social processes of learning		X		
an active interpreter of new information in terms of what she/he already uniquely knows	X			
intrinsically motivated		X		
perceives him/herself in control of his/her own decision-making		X		
takes responsibility for the outcomes of his/her actions		X		
has confidence in him-/herself		X		

- Can you please tell me why you chose this/these [point at strongly agree statement(s)] characteristic(s) as good ones? Why do you agree with them?
[not asked]
- Why do you think this/these [point at strongly disagree statement(s)] characteristic(s) are not a good fit as a description of an “autonomous learner”? Why do you disagree with them?
[not asked]

You seemed to be thinking about the “intrinsically motivated” statement?

*Yea, well I think if we are talking about the autonomous learner, are we talking about a learner that knows their learning journey and works at the steps towards reaching that goal in the end ... is that teacher-led? Is that led by pressure from parents? Is that because, ‘Okay, I’ve got a parents-conference coming up, I know that my teacher is going to talk about this with my parents.’ So I am not one hundred percent sure it’s intrinsically motivated. And ... What’s another one that was interesting ... (long pause) This one: [reads from handout] ‘perceives themselves in control of their own decision-making’. And that’s something I certainly try to do. Especially at the start of a unit of learning. But I think with the way that teaching is at the moment, a lot of it is already planned. So, we have those introduction lessons. So, for instance, next, after *censored* we will be teaching a whole unit of learning on businesses, and how businesses work, and students will be setting up their own businesses. Now, what’s great about that is that the children get into groups, they have different roles, they will make it their own product, manufacture it and then try to sell it at the end of the year; which for me, that is all part of their own decision-making. However ... they have to choose something out of a set of criteria and I am just not sure the children have that much freedom in their own learning ... in the primary school. I know in the secondary school, they do have a lot more freedom. And I think the reason for that is that in primary they still need lots of scaffolding. And (long pause) yea, then this one, [reads from handout] ‘has confidence’. I got two students who do not have any confidence whatsoever. But then, ‘Are they an autonomous learner?’ ... I don’t know ... Can you be a low-attaining autonomous learner? (long pause)*

Do you think so?

(long pause). Yea, I suppose you can. I got two children, I don't know if you've read 'The Whole-Brain Child'. Have you read the book 'The Whole-Brain Child'? It talks about the developing of the left brain side and the right brain side. And then there is a bit on that called 'The Wheel of Awareness' and it's about teaching children [starts drawing on handout] ... if we are at the center of the wheel and then ... children ... in fact, even humans ... they have got all these thoughts, sensations, feelings, and images that go all the way around and I think for me, and for lots of learners, if they are stuck on something, or if they are in a certain part of their learning that they are finding really hard, then they can concentrate on just this bit [draws a sector in circle and points at it] and they get so low in confidence. And what I am trying to teach lots of my children is that, 'You are focusing on that, yet you are finding it really hard at the minute and that can lead to worries, to not enjoying school, but then, you are here [points at sector], but you've got all of this that is part of your personality as well'. And that is actually making a really big difference. So you are saying 'Do they have confidence in themselves?', I'd say, you are more confident – this is just what I think – your more confident children ... I would say they are more autonomous. And the one's that are low-attaining are the one's that are less confident and thus less autonomous. So what I am trying to make my own practice is, 'How can we try to make the low children more autonomous?', which is hard. And I am using this wheel of awareness which works really well. You should check it out.

- Do you think you regularly foster autonomy in your classroom?
 - How do you foster autonomy in the classroom? Can you give a concrete example?
 - What kind of materials or resources do you think are suitable for fostering learner autonomy?
 - Think about: classroom displays, handouts, books/library, electronic equipment
 - **IB:** To what extent do you think the **IB** teacher support materials or other materials on the **OCC** (Online Curriculum Centre) promote learner autonomy in your classroom?
[not asked]

Well, we regularly ... In terms of targets within maths and literacy, and actually, they have got personality targets as well. So, you know like the IB profile, where they have got risk-takers, communicators and so on and that is a huge thing at the school. So every end of the lesson, or end of the day or end of the unit, we would have that discussion with the children. 'When were you a risk-taker this week?', or 'When were you a communicator?', or 'How are you self-reflective?', things like that. And that starts all the way from key stage one right until they leave.

So, the IB learner profile is already enforced from the beginning?

Yes, they are brought up with it and they know it inside out. So they really know the IB learner profile and they know all these terms mean. And during the whole-school assembly and key stage assemblies we talk about, you know, how did this person show ... or how was this person reflective and so on. So the kids know it inside out. The kids are responsible for their own target as well. So, if we had a

week where we'd been writing stories or information texts, or whatever we have been writing, and the children will have written their own target, they reflect on their own writing and say 'Oh yea, I have hit my target, I am going to make my nail on the board'.

So, what kind of resources do you use for that? How exactly do you do that? Do you have like a graphic organizer?

Yes, it's all visual so all children can see. Don't know if that's affecting the children who didn't hit their target but yea. So, I've got for literacy a huge poster with the kids' names on it and they need to get on to the top. So if they hit their target three times in their writing, then we will have a conversation and say 'Okay, look at where your writing is now'. So it's never a directed target. And in maths, they decide on their targets as well and that's in the back of the room. So each child has a portfolio and during parent-conferences, which is where the parents, the teachers, and the student are present, and the student gives the conference. So then the student talks through all their pieces of learning with their parents. And we show them the IB learner profiles and then the parents ask, 'Oh, how did you show you were a risk-taker in this unit?' and then the children will quite confidently reply back. So we have got those maths targets as well and they talk through it with their parents. And the targets, they tick it off as they go along the year. So, it's mainly time tables if I am being honest. So then the child will say 'Oh, I know my time table inside-out' and then they can prove it to me and then they tick it off. I use my extra-support staff to do time table testing and things like that.

- To what extent do you differentiate in your classroom?

What we try to do is not differentiate for the sake of it because you are creating work for yourself and we are actually putting a cap at where the children can go up. And these are directions from head of school. We don't differentiate among students like that, we give them challenges. Students get access to challenge one, challenge two, challenge three and then we say to children, 'Okay, if you are feeling confident, then you are going to go up to challenge three and you are going to learn and practice these skills. And challenge three is more, in maths, its more of reasoning activities. Challenge two would be, 'Okay, I'm feeling confident, I want to have a go, but I'm not ready for the problem-solving yet'. And challenge one is usually, 'Okay, I need to practice the basic skills first because I move up to challenge two'. So, that's embedded in the whole primary school and secondary school. In terms of differentiation in other ways, it's mainly differentiation through expectation, for me personally. So, if you want to go above and beyond, you put this and this and this in your learning and your learning will look something like this. But we never ... we don't differentiate like, 'You are good at this and you are good at this'. Like it is differentiated in the skills. So learning the skills, and then differentiate. So to say 'Okay, I got those skills now, now I am going to apply those skills to problem-solve'.

- In how far do you think do
 - teachers,
 - parents/the home (cf. SES),
 - peers,
 - the school curriculum (the IB)
 - or the school as a whole

have an impact on a learner's autonomy?

Well, at my school, we don't have parent evenings. We call them parent conference, three-way conferences, where the teacher, the parents, and the child talk about the child's learning. But the child directs that, they are in charge of that twenty-minute conference and they show all their best learning throughout their portfolio. So, in term two, we looked at fractions in math and I demonstrated that I really understand fractions because I showed through this that I can do all this. And I showed that during a problem-solving activity. And then the parents, are encouraged to ask them questions about their learning, such as, 'Oh, what was the hardest part of that learning? How did you overcome any challenges then? If you did this in a different way, how would you do it differently?'. And the parents are quite good at getting on board with things like that. So apart from that, I don't really ... Parents come out and help at the school if they want to. You know, they are entitled to go have a meeting with the teacher whenever they want to. A lot of the parents are more concerned about the academic side of the learning and not so much about whether 'Okay, is my child independent? Will my child still ask for help? Do they sit there and scratch their ass? Or actually, are they proactive?'. Most parents don't bother. They just want to know what level their child on an academic level. Most parents though, to be fair, not all parents.

What about the school itself? What about the leadership team?

*Amazing. Yea... absolutely amazing. Everything I know in terms of assessment-capable learners, in terms of having a growth mindset, in terms of embedding that ethos in my classroom, 'You know, everything happens for a reason and how this has an impact on a global scale, like from the top'. So into that. The learning is ridiculous. Constant professional development, and meetings that we have. So, it is an ongoing process all the time. So when you get a job at *censored*, it's constantly reviewed. Observation of the teachers, you know, assessment-capable learners, independence, those are things that come up all the time. So, I had an observation a couple of weeks ago. And it's not an observation where they just sit in the back. They get involved. My observer was the head of school. So, it's not really team-teaching, but they observe as they work with the kids, they observe as they are talking with a group. And one thing that will be said in every observation is, 'Oh, and what are you doing in this lesson?'. And they expect the children to know what they are doing. 'Okay, and what have you been doing within this unit of learning? All right, what do you think you are going to do after this?'. And they expect the children to be able to answer. So, for instance, a basic example would be, 'Oh, we have been learning how to add up using column addition. Now, we are going to apply that to solve these problems. And next, we are going to do some more problem-solving examples.' So, there are journeys of observations and children are expected to talk about their learning and to understand why they are doing a piece of learning. The worst-case scenario for a teacher would be, the observer asks a question to a child, and they have no clue what they are doing. Because that just shows that not everybody in the classroom has understood the learning and if they don't understand what they are doing, what's the point of doing it?*

- In your teacher training, can you think of any classes or lecturers that emphasized fostering learner autonomy?
 - Was it covered enough/too much?
 - Should it be covered more/less?

Well, no. But I was trained in the UK ... which produces some great teachers, that all go abroad (laughs). But, no, that was never ... To be honest, the main topics in my teaching – and this was in my teaching in inner city London – was behavior management. I think that was always the priority and the rest kind of followed after that. Whereas at an international school, the kids are there because they want to learn. And there is a bigger closer connection between the school and the home. They know that whatever happens at school will be reflected back at home. Because we have got correspondence with the parents and because, you know, behavior management is not a problem at an international school. It's more focused on the learning. But I think in my teaching it was more about behavior management and not much after that.

- **IB:** What about any **IB PD courses** that you took? Can you think of any concrete examples where an IB PD course emphasized learner autonomy?
[not asked]
- To what extent do you think ICT in the classroom may foster autonomous learning?
 - Do you believe that if students have easy access to technology that they also learn more independently? Why / Why not?
 - How do you use technology in your classroom and for what purpose?
(Please provide concrete examples)
 - To what extent do you believe do **international schools** aim to promote learner autonomy through the use of ICT in the classroom? [not asked]
 - Do you believe that at an **IB World School** does more so than a non-IB school? [not asked]

Well, my best friend is head of ICT. And he has done an amazing job with the ICT curriculum. So, big thing on digital systems, yep. And the children know about their digital foot print, they are learning at the minute how to spot fake news. So, they are learning how to be thinkers, which not many people can do.

Are those things taught by the ICT department, or is that something you are teaching as well?

Yea, well, they have ICT once a week at the minute, which is only one hour. And next year that changes and teachers are going to teach ICT alongside the ICT teachers. So, I think, next year they are going to have twice as much ICT. One lesson taught with the ICT teachers and then the follow-up lesson will be taught with their normal classroom teacher, which is me. Yea ... depends on what ICT skills means. Like, my class uses laptops at least three times a week. We have been blogging a lot. So, when we have been discussing something in the classroom, I always put it up and make a blog about it and the students are expected to carry on the conversation. When we are working on math problems, I always put up some reasoning activities on the blog and the students are expected to tell me what they think. And then within the ICT at the minute, they are planning holidays and looking at their footprint.

This blog, is that your virtual learning environment? Or is there a platform at the school that you use?

Firefly. That's our virtual learning platform. That's the software we use. And then every single class has their blog which can be accessed by everyone at the

school, including parents. So parents sometimes also look at it. And my friend who does the ICT curriculum just introduced that. The older children bring in their own laptop or their own iPad and the feedback that he got from his observation was the fact that the principal of the school said 'You can't believe how independent the children are with their laptops now'. Because in his observation they were using this software that they have never used before and within ten minutes they were able to do it by themselves. They were completely independent. So, I think ICT is pretty good at our school.

What about blended-learning, flipped classroom? Is that –

Flipped classroom ... from my understanding, flipped classroom is where ... the learning is directed from the children. I sometimes use it for summing up something at the end of the lesson. So, I've got a random name generator at the board and then I'll have the student sit on the seat and she will randomly choose someone's name, and then this person will then choose a question that I want the class to reflect on and they will then have a discussion based on that question. But I don't really know much about flipped classroom.

What about blended learning? So, basically, using technology to transfer the learning to back at home.

Well, you see ... In an ideal world ... and all teachers I think agree on this, especially in my year group. There will be no printing. All files will be on Firefly and we will put up some videos online with directed questions that they can answer online. And then they decide, 'Okay, I feel comfortable with this, so I move on to challenge two, or I am feeling really comfortable, I want to move to challenge three'. And that we would all be doing on laptops. I have done that sometimes, where instead of printing worksheets, I'd be doing that. And when that's happened, children then have gone home, they always come back to me and say, 'Oh, I've done challenge three!' even though they were never asked to do it. So, I do think that there is a big thing about taking the work home. And about the blogs, they are very good at going home, looking at the blogs, leaving a comment. Because they see that this is just an extension of the classroom and what happens at home ... it doesn't necessarily mean the learning stops there. And the parents are really good with that. Within our topics as well ... we don't call it homework, we call it home learning. And we send maths home learning home once a week on a Friday and the children are expected to do that for fifteen to twenty minutes. We also have once a term, depending on what we are teaching, we have different activities that go home. So we are doing business next and one of the activities is 'Go and research an ethical brand and share your findings with your class'. So then, there is a list of twenty things the children can go and do. The children don't have to do it, but if they do it, they bring it in and they share it with the class. And the parents get on board with that home learning. And my parents are a lot of CEOs of big companies, so they go home and interview their parents who have got their own business. The children don't have to do that, but the intrinsically motivated ones will do that. The other unmotivated ones don't get bored at the same time. So, it's quite good and you can see the ones who really want to do good work for class, you can see the ones who did it because the parents at home said you have to do this and you can see the ones who simply don't care. And it's funny ... the high-attaining children are more motivated to do their home learning tasks. Again, it's not a necessity because we understand that they have lots of other co-curricular

activities too. Then, we have parents who send them to Japanese language school after school too. So some children just don't have the time to do it.

- To what extent do you believe does freedom (i.e. giving students choices) foster learner autonomy?
 - Do you normally give your students a variety of tasks they can choose from?
Why / Why not?
 - If yes, can you give me an example?

Well, it's freedom based on teachers' choices, if that makes sense. So, teachers will say 'You've got this option, this option, and this option, and then you can choose'. So, it's loose, but that's not total freedom. I know though that that happens more in upper grades at our school. I just can't think of examples.

Language

Finally, I would like to talk about the language aspect in relation to learner autonomy and your teaching.

- A common statement that can be found in official **IB documents** is the phrase "every teacher is a language teacher". The IB argues that this is the case because at most **IB World Schools** the students' first language is different from the language of instruction.
 - To what extent to you think does this statement hold true at IB schools?
 - Is this something you agree with? Why or why not?

*Well, I don't know because I think this is something that depends on the school. I know some schools are very heavily *censored*[nationality of host country] and *censored*[name of school] isn't. We have children from all over the world.*

So, if you look at your class, how many native English speakers do you have? See, it's quite hard. So, we have an EAL program. I've got five students in the EAL program. But, for instance, I do have a Korean girl who went through the EAL program really fast. So she is quite good numerically, but she still has problems in other areas due to language. She is quite brilliant, but two weeks ago, I gave her an assessment in maths because I thought she is good enough to go on to the extended learners program. Now, she got half marks on that. So, it's something we have talked about and when I explained to her what she has to do, she was like, 'Oh, I get it now' and then she listed it. So, language is still a barrier, but she is not on the EAL program. So ... I don't think I've answered the question now (laughs). So, the question was something like, 'Are all teachers language teachers?'. So, I think since I am at an international school, I am more aware of it. And I make sure I constantly have vocabulary on display and we use the smartboards to highlight subject-specific language. So for instance in a math lesson, I would have vocabulary in the upper corner, so that they don't rely on the words when they answer a question because all the words are there. I also make sure my speech is slow. And then, you know, when we are writing in English, it

makes sense to start with an introduction, and then you go on to the next paragraph and have a fact and the next and then you write a conclusion. So, we had a whole EAL PD-day. And the thing is, apparently most Asians don't think like that in writing. It's more of a spiral. So, for example, we have been writing some information texts and it was my EAL children who found it really hard, starting with an introduction and then talking about all the facts that were mentioned in the introduction. And on our PD-day, our EAL instructor said that especially the Asian children find that hard because they don't follow that logical order of essay writing. When they are writing an essay, it is more of a spiral thing where they start with what they want to talk about straight away. And then they lead to it. And I had no idea that that's the way a lot of Asian people thought. But it's something I am going to look up, definitely. Because it makes such a big difference, I think.

- In how far does teaching your classes in English influence your teaching?
[not asked]
- How would you describe the language proficiency of your students?
[not asked]
 - Do you think that the way you teach would be significantly different if most of your students' first language were English?
[not asked]
 - To what extent do you pay attention to the language your students use in the classroom and the work they submit?
[not asked]
- For non-English teachers: To what extent do you consider yourself a language teacher (when not teaching a language class)?
[not asked]
- To what extent would you say does teaching your students in a language that is different from their first language constitute a barrier for autonomous learning?
 - Do you think your students could be more autonomous or independent if there wasn't such a language barrier? Why or why not?

*I think they would feel a lot more confident. So I've got a TA who speaks *censored*[language of host country]. So I don't mind if she speaks to my *censored*[nationality of host country] kids in *censored*[language of host country]. But ... does it make them more autonomous? ... I don't know because (long pause). When you are judging whether someone is autonomous, you are judging it from an English point of view.*

What does that mean? What do you mean by 'from an English point of view'?
So, an autonomous learner for me is someone who know their learning journey and someone who knows their steps inside-out. Now, the steps are all in English

and the journey is all in English. So, I would say it's a slight barrier, definitely. But then again, ... well, no ... they are expected to speak in English at all times and they can't speak to their friends in their native language at school. They are expected to speak English. I would say it's a slight barrier and it's no coincidence that my EAL children are the ones that are the lower attainers in terms of levels. And there is definitely a correlation in that. And I would also say that there is definitely a causation. If you don't speak your native language in the classroom, it's definitely going to affect your learning. And in my classroom, if children don't know a word, they put their hand up and go 'What does that mean? And that?'. It matters a lot. So the other day, I was explaining the word 'dependent'. And I go 'it means that they rely on it'. And the kids go, 'What does rely mean?'. And it's like that all the time. So, yea, that happens all the time.

- [Only if question has not been answered before] [not asked]
What kind of additional resources do you use to help your students when they struggle with language?
 - i.e. How do you scaffold learning in your classroom?
 - (How) do you differentiate in your classroom?

Interview 3

School & Teacher information

First, I would like to start asking you a few questions about your school and your professional background. This is for me to get a better idea of you as an educator, and the setting in which you currently work and have worked in in the past.

Question	Answer
Grade level / age group <i>What grades do you teach? What age group do you teach?</i>	Grades 6,7; ages 12-13 Grade 10, ages 16-17
Subjects <i>What subjects do you teach?</i>	EAL (grammar, writing skills, learning support for other classes); online independent/self study group for grade 10 (students take online classes that they chose themselves, teacher supervises their learning progress)
Curriculum at school <i>What curricula or academic programs does your school offer? (Besides the IB).</i>	IB continuum (PYP, MYP; DP)
Language of instruction at school <i>What is the language of instruction at your school? Are there any other languages used (besides in foreign language classes)?</i>	English
Number of students <i>How many students are enrolled in your school?</i>	Approximately 250
Number of faculty members <i>How many faculty members does your school employ?</i>	Approximately 30-40
Other staff members <i>How many other staff members does your school employ? For example: any kind of teaching support staff, IT, maintenance, security, kitchen staff etc.</i>	EAL specialists, librarian, school doctor, kitchen, music instructors, instructors for other after school activities, facilities/maintenance team
Facilities & Equipment <i>What kind of facilities does your school offer? What kind of equipment is available at your school and in your classroom? (e.g. projector, laptops, tablets etc)</i>	Apple environment, laptops for each student in secondary, ipads in primary, white boards, active boards, projectors, sound/music equipment, sound studios

Other information about the school (certain programs offered, specializations, school environment etc) <i>Is there anything else you can tell me about your school? Does your school offer any additional programs? Are there any specializations? What is your school environment like? What is it that makes your school unique or different from other schools you have been to?</i>	*censored*
Experience at school <i>How long have you been teaching at this school?</i>	1 year
Teaching experience <i>How long have you worked as a teacher? When did you receive your QTS?</i>	1 year ago, CELTA
Choice of profession <i>Do you remember why you chose to become a teacher?</i>	Wanted to teach English, but did not spend years of stud for a degree; travel – teach abroad; school offered an EAL position → did CELTA course after the offer to teach English at school
Teacher Training <i>How do you feel about your teacher training? Did you enjoy teacher's college? What are positive things that you can highlight about your training? What are some things about your training that disliked or disapprove of?</i>	Always interested in all kinds of forms of education, so experiencing teaching would be useful; but never dreamed of a teaching career; did some volunteering in Guatemala to teach English which was a great experience and thus decided to get more training and do a CELTA; CELTA was very good preparation for lesson planning and unit planning, but not so much for classroom management or any kind of long-term planning
Age <25 25-35 36-45 46-55 56+	25-35
Gender <i>male / female / other</i>	female

Learner autonomy

The overall research question of my topic is: “How can learner autonomy be fostered at IB schools that use English as the medium of instruction?”. Therefore,

I will ask you a few questions about learner autonomy and your teaching philosophy in connection to learner autonomy.

- In your own words, what does “learner autonomy” mean to you?
 - Can you give me a very brief summary of what is meant by the term “learner autonomy”?

I think, ... the learners' ability to do things his own way. And not necessarily choosing what he is going to learn but maybe to a certain extent that too, but within a classroom he or she chooses how he is going to go about or what he is going to do pretty much. So, I guess that would mean ... what he is going to do in order to ... to do what is required of him. There are certain requirements, but how he is going to get to this is his choice. So the freedom of doing things his or her own way.

- [Interviewer hands participant sheet of definitions on learner autonomy]
 I will show you a list of different characteristics of learner autonomy and I would like you to decide to what extent you agree or disagree with each of the following items. You will be given 4 choices to indicate your agreement: “I strongly agree”, “I agree”, “I disagree”, “I strongly disagree”. Please carefully read through each item on your paper and indicate to what extent you agree or disagree.

An autonomous learner is capable of...	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
determining realistic and reachable goals		X		
selecting appropriate methods and techniques to be used		X		
monitoring their own learning process		X		
evaluating the progress of their own learning		X		
Learner profiles: An autonomous learner is...	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
an active participant in the social processes of learning		X		
an active interpreter of new information in terms of what she/he already uniquely knows		X		
intrinsically motivated	X			
perceives him/herself in control of his/her own decision-making		X		
takes responsibility for the outcomes of his/her actions		X		
has confidence in him-/herself		X		

- Can you please tell me why you chose this/these [point at strongly agree statement(s)] characteristic(s) as good ones? Why do you agree with them?
[not asked]
- Why do you think this/these [point at strongly disagree statement(s)] characteristic(s) are not a good fit as a description of an “autonomous learner”? Why do you disagree with them?
[not asked]

So, you put “agree” for all items except for one, “intrinsically motivated”. For that one you put “strongly agree”. Is there a specific reason why? Do you think that this is the most important one or –

Probably... I think, you can't become autonomous and sort of be your own ... sort of be in charge of your own learning if you are not motivated to do all that work that requires it. Because it is an autonomous thing if you You have to bear in mind your goals. You have to choose how you are going to do it. So it is not like ... I mean, I imagine a lot of kids would like to be autonomous learners but do not realize how much work they have to put into it. All these things that teachers often serve on a plate ... they would have to do that themselves. I think, it also requires some maturity. I am very interested in what kind of setting this could be done with these IB kids because I find that for younger kids, like twelve or thirteen-year-olds, structure is very important and they still do not have the skills that enhance this structure or the setting ... how they are going to study. Like, I tried to help them to set their own goals, but they would lose track of them. I think it would be interesting to see what would be the teacher's role in that class. Probably more of a coach, rather than someone who brings in all the materials and provides the learning experience. It would be the kids who create the learning experience and the teacher would just monitor more. But here it says [reads from learner characteristics sheet] 'an autonomous learner is capable of monitoring their own learning process'. It would be interesting to see the reality of it. I mean, this was all where I said 'agree' and 'strongly agree' ... this [referring to the handout] to me is more of an ideal version of an autonomous learner. I know that to bring my students to this [points at sheet] would take a lot of work and time because, as of now, they are far from being able to do all of this.

So, would you say that being intrinsically motivated is a prerequisite or a requirement? ... Otherwise you can not be autonomous?

I mean, it can be extrinsic too, I guess. I just think it would just work better for a longer time if you are intrinsically motivated, if you want to be in charge of your own learning. So, yea, I think it is a key point. Definitely. If you don't have that ... (long pause) You can lack confidence and still do it. Of course, you can lose motivation once in a while, but yes, I would say it is a prerequisite.

- Do you think you regularly foster autonomy in your classroom?
 - How do you foster autonomy in the classroom? Can you give a concrete example?
 - What kind of materials or resources do you think are suitable for fostering learner autonomy?

So, for example, last term we did myths and legends and I highly encouraged students to come with myths and legends from their own culture or even bring in a specific story they like. And one student did and he put a lot of work in it. So he was very motivated and his last assessment on this was so much better

because of this. So, yes, if it is relevant for them ... if it is something that interests them, then the results are much better. But it is not always easy of course to find something that interests them. So that was like one thing that I did with them. Like, sort of give them the power to choose. I often do that. But with the younger kids, it is often problematic. If you give them too much choice and sort of do whatever you want, they tend to feel lost and don't know where to start. So they need more and then they choose and then they love it. But you just can't give them such an open platform as you would give to older students. You have to put that into consideration because then it will have the opposite effect. It can hinder their learning instead of enhancing it. ... and then also ... I am still planning on doing it, but I think I will give them the choice ... we are doing culture and celebrations, and we are doing the ones that we are part of in the classroom. But I want to still give them a choice of four more and sort of choose a culture that is present at the school and they should vote and decide for themselves which one would be better. I thought I would give them a certain area of culture they decide to talk about. But once again, with the young grades you have to be careful. But I often give them the freedom because of what I am going to assess ... it is okay. I can give them more freedom. If the form they are presenting it were crucial, I wouldn't be able to give them so much freedom. Well, but with the older kids you could imagine... that they could choose it and tailor it according to the assessment criteria. So with the younger kids, I would give them a degree of autonomy that would not hinder me from assessing them. Because I am still assessing their speaking skills. But I am still thinking about other ways of assessing autonomy ... (long pause) I very much support 'think for yourself'. I don't know if that necessarily relates to autonomy, but I often ask them, 'What do you think the right answer is?'. Because they often want to know what the right answer is when I ask them, but I often tell them, 'I am not interested in the right answer. I am more interested in your answer'. But that's more about creative thinking ... [reads] 'an active interpreter of new information in terms of what she/he already knows'. I think we do that a lot. I try to ask them to remember what we already did and how this could relate to previous stories that we have read et cetera et cetera ... anyway

- Think about: classroom displays, handouts, books/library, electronic equipment
[not asked]
- **IB:** To what extent do you think the **IB** teacher support materials or other materials on the **OCC** (Online Curriculum Centre) promote learner autonomy in your classroom?

Not IB. Since I didn't have any specific IB training ... The only thing I received was from my colleague. She helped me with my unit planning and helped me with IB-specific things. EAL is not necessarily part of IB yet. Therefore, in EAL we never had to meet the criteria that IB requires. So, unfortunately not.

- To what extent do you differentiate in your classroom?

I don't think I do enough of it. It comes in later, I guess. When you already have good control over the kids and know the kids. But as a first-year teacher, I struggle with that. There are a lot more prompting things so to speak. Like, I have to prioritize. I haven't done enough of it. I try to do it, but in my planning I don't focus on it enough, I think. And the reason why as well is because the

*differentiation I have to do is for special needs kids. I also don't have training in that on how to differentiate in that. But with *censored*[name of coworker], she helped me with that. Like we have different fonts. I had a text and I gave the printed version to all the kids except the two kids with dyslexia and they wrote it in their own special font on their computers. So, I did that. Today, with the one kid that has learning disabilities, I give him more time and like ... the other kids didn't listen to the entire thing, he could listen to the entire thing so that it makes more sense to him. And I also give him for specific instructions, more attention because often they need more; which is necessarily not the best way to go because then the other kids are lacking my attention and that's not fair either. So, I am sure there are lots of other techniques and things I could use and I think I will acquire those skills as a teacher at some point, it is just a matter of time and experience.*

- In how far do you think do
 - teachers,
 - parents/the home (cf. SES),
 - peers,
 - the school curriculum (the **IB**)
 - or the school as a whole

have an impact on a learner's autonomy?

Well the peers not so much I would say. They just give each other answers for whatever they need. So that is not really enabling them. They are just copying. I mean, I am still thinking of grade six and seven. You have to take that into consideration because that's different. But I do think the school at itself, and I am sure there are teachers who do less of it, but ... I am sure there are teachers who are just guiding the learning process and are very good to help students to learn on their own and to come to understand and to sort of walk the path themselves. But they give them little rocks in that path with some tips and stuff. So I know that a lot of teachers do it in their teaching. I think the school itself, the kind of values it promotes amongst students, it supports them to think for themselves. To question the content of what they are learning and to sort of decide for themselves. I think that this is within the school's philosophy and they promote it, I think. Whether it really happens and reaches the kids, that I can't tell.

[censored content that is not relevant to the question]

But in their learning process, I think that it depends on the specific teacher. And I know there are a lot of teachers who are good at it and support it.

- In your teacher training, can you think of any classes or lecturers that emphasized fostering learner autonomy?

Well, ... 'Don't serve the answer' is what I can remember. So, sort of, lead the student through the way... uhm what is it called guided ... guided-discovery, that was one technique that we did. So it is guided, but they discover it for themselves. And there was very much of that in the training.

- Was it covered enough/too much?
- Should it be covered more/less?

In my training (long pause) no, no no. Definitely not. But then the training would have to have been much longer and it was already very intense as it was and

really covered all it could. I think the problem is that the training is just too short and there was no time to do specific training on learner autonomy. But I don't think it was the fault of CELTA or Cambridge that they didn't do it. There is simply not enough time.

- **IB:** What about any **IB PD courses** that you took? Can you think of any concrete examples where an IB PD course emphasized learner autonomy?

Okay, so I received... well our PD-days you could count, I guess. And I did IELTS training. And I think, yea, the ATL skills within the IB focuses on that. And being reflective I think is an extremely important part of being autonomous. I think it won't work well if you can't reflect on your learning and see what you can do well and what can be improved et cetera. So, yes, definitely. So we did a lot about whole-person development stuff and how to incorporate ATLs in our unit planning and stuff. So yes, I did receive some training in that.

- To what extent do you think ICT in the classroom may foster autonomous learning?
 - Do you believe that if students have easy access to technology that they also learn more independently? Why / Why not?

I think so because there is simply more choice when you have technology available. Technology gives you such a great platform to choose how you ... what resources you want to use, I mean it is an incredible platform. You can be autonomous without technology, but I just think that, for example, the last statement here [reads from handout] 'evaluating the progress of their own learning'. Without technology, this would be much harder. With technology it is much easier. Even for us, using ManageBac, for example. [reads from handout] 'monitoring their own learning', I guess with a reflection journal this could be done without technology. Then uhm, [reads from handout] 'select appropriate methods and techniques to be used', there is so much more they can use with technology. Obviously, they can also do it without technology, but they just have a lot more resources available if they have access to technology and also different forms of media. Videos, recordings, games, audio, ... I mean, the amount of what they can use ... because it's all stored online. So yes, I think it can only help. Especially nowadays because the kids know technology so well. It's their medium, their tool. So, I think, yea, very much so. (long pause) I don't know ... I am also thinking whether technology could diminish their autonomy (long pause). Yes, it could diminish their learning because often they just copy something and that takes away their autonomy. So, I guess it could both ways. If you have a cautious autonomous learner, it can only help him. If you don't it can hurt him.

- How do you use technology in your classroom and for what purpose?
(Please provide concrete examples)
[not asked]
- To what extent do you believe do **international schools** aim to promote learner autonomy through the use of ICT in the classroom?
[not asked]
 - Do you believe that at an **IB World School** does more so than a non-IB school?
[not asked]

- To what extent do you believe does freedom (i.e. giving students choices) foster learner autonomy?
 - Do you normally give your students a variety of tasks they can choose from? Why / Why not?
 - If yes, can you give me an example?

Again, with grade six or seven, that's more difficult. I have experienced giving them more choice and then them being lost. So I am not sure about that... I have been told by my other colleagues, 'The younger the students, the more specific you have to be'. So the younger they are, the more practice and repetition and structure they need. The older they get, the more their brain is developed to make more autonomous decisions. I think the term 'autonomous' should be clearly defined for younger kids, what exactly that means. Because I think it is definitely different from older kids. But I mean it depends on how you define autonomy. But with the older kids, so the grade 10 kids, I give them very much freedom to choose their own direction and I also find it sometimes ... they are lacking the intrinsic motivation, for example. Not everyone wants to be autonomous, and I think that needs to be taken into account. And is there anything wrong with that? That not everybody wants to be autonomous. Does it mean that they can't be successful? (long pause) or learn a lot? Or does it mean, ... well, I am just asking rhetorical questions here and not answering ... I am just thinking about my students. I think a lot of them would love it, but for others it would just be very challenging and they wouldn't enjoy it and it would have the opposite effect; they wouldn't want to learn. And I think it is a specific way of education. So if you implement it well over a long period of time, then yes, I can see it as being helpful. And I think autonomy is something they should claim as adults and I think you will work better if you feel autonomous. But that is just my perspective. I am just thinking of my older class. Some of them love it, and some of them really don't. Some of them really don't like it when they have to be in charge of their own learning and they feel that they are maybe not supported enough. They might feel that this is supposed to be my job. Because it is more work for them, but more rewarding in the end. Depends.

Language

Finally, I would like to talk about the language aspect in relation to learner autonomy and your teaching.

- A common statement that can be found in official **IB documents** is the phrase “every teacher is a language teacher”. The IB argues that this is the case because at most **IB World Schools** the students' first language is different from the language of instruction.
 - To what extent do you think does this statement hold true at IB schools?
 - Is this something you agree with? Why or why not?

Okay. I think ... I agree. (laughs). I think at this school, an IB school, I think some teachers are better at it than others. Some teachers are just focusing on their subject. I found that teachers with a background in humanities are often better at it. But this is a far stretch for me because I have never sat in their science classes. I might be surprised at how much support the kids there might get. It's more our role to support the teachers of specific subjects, rather than the teachers who are already supporting an entire class ... for various reasons. The class is too big, there is not enough time to cover all their content, they can't differentiate enough in their class with all the English A kids. So I am sure it's a

challenge for them but I think in their instruction, the majority of the teachers take that into their consideration and offer more guidance and support. I would assume so. Like, from my experience, the teachers who also teach English or also EAL and another subject are the best because they understand the need for their EAL kids. And there are teachers who reach out to us and who want help for a student that struggles in their subject, or for a specific subject.

- In how far does teaching your classes in English influence your teaching?
[not asked]

- How would you describe the language proficiency of your students?

Well, I teach EAL, so I get the weakest students. The grade ten that I have, the majority of them are English A students, so they are very proficient. The English B students need more support, especially because the DP is around the corner and their English is not yet good enough. So this is very much linked to their intrinsic motivation. They may be proficient enough for now, but not for DP yet. Or at least it will be very hard for them.

[All the following questions have not been asked because they do not apply to the teacher's situation as an EAL instructor]

- Do you think that the way you teach would be significantly different if most of your students' first language were English?
 - To what extent do you pay attention to the language your students use in the classroom and the work they submit?
- For non-English teachers: To what extent do you consider yourself a language teacher (when not teaching a language class)?
- To what extent would you say does teaching your students in a language that is different from their first language constitute a barrier for autonomous learning?
 - Do you think your students could be more autonomous or independent if there wasn't such a language barrier? Why or why not?
- [Only if question has not been answered before]
What kind of additional resources do you use to help your students when they struggle with language?
 - i.e. How do you scaffold learning in your classroom?
 - (How) do you differentiate in your classroom?

Interview 4

School & Teacher information

First, I would like to start asking you a few questions about your school and your professional background. This is for me to get a better idea of you as an educator, and the setting in which you currently work and have worked in in the past.

Question	Answer
Grade level / age group <i>What grades do you teach? What age group do you teach?</i>	Grades 7, 11 & EAL support for all groups Secondary-aged students
Subjects <i>What subjects do you teach?</i>	EAL, library
Curriculum at school <i>What curricula or academic programs does your school offer? (Besides the IB).</i>	IB continuum (PYP, MYP; DP)
Language of instruction at school <i>What is the language of instruction at your school? Are there any other languages used (besides in foreign language classes)?</i>	English
Number of students <i>How many students are enrolled in your school?</i>	Approximately 250
Number of faculty members <i>How many faculty members does your school employ?</i>	Approximately 30-40
Other staff members <i>How many other staff members does your school employ? For example: any kind of teaching support staff, IT, maintenance, security, kitchen staff etc.</i>	EAL specialists, librarian, school doctor, kitchen, music instructors, instructors for other after school activities, facilities/maintenance team
Facilities & Equipment <i>What kind of facilities does your school offer? What kind of equipment is available at your school and in your classroom? (e.g. projector, laptops, tablets etc)</i>	Apple environment, laptops for each student in secondary, iPads in primary, white boards, active boards, projectors, sound/music equipment, sound studios

Other information about the school (certain programs offered, specializations, school environment etc) <i>Is there anything else you can tell me about your school? Does your school offer any additional programs? Are there any specializations? What is your school environment like? What is it that makes your school unique or different from other schools you have been to?</i>	*censored*
Experience at school <i>How long have you been teaching at this school?</i>	3 years
Teaching experience <i>How long have you worked as a teacher? When did you receive your QTS?</i>	13 years ago
Choice of profession <i>Do you remember why you chose to become a teacher?</i>	To be a secondary teacher; finished undergraduate degree and wanted to teach older students
Teacher Training <i>How do you feel about your teacher training? Did you enjoy teacher's college? What are positive things that you can highlight about your training? What are some things about your training that disliked or disapprove of?</i>	All courses based at university and then practicum at the end; theory did not make much sense until the practicum; relevance for and application in classroom was missing
Age <25 25-35 36-45 46-55 56+	36-45
Gender <i>male / female / other</i>	female

Learner autonomy

The overall research question of my topic is: "How can learner autonomy be fostered at IB schools that use English as the medium of instruction?". Therefore, I will ask you a few questions about learner autonomy and your teaching philosophy in connection to learner autonomy.

- In your own words, what does "learner autonomy" mean to you?
 - Can you give me a very brief summary of what is meant by the term "learner autonomy"?

To me ... okay, so learner autonomy would be more like how students make connections to their work, how well they understand it on their own without me being the person who gives them all the guidance telling them what they need to do.

- [Interviewer hands participant sheet of definitions on learner autonomy]
I will show you a list of different characteristics of learner autonomy and I would like you to decide to what extent you agree or disagree with each of the following items. You will be given 4 choices to indicate your agreement: "I strongly agree", "I agree", "I disagree", "I strongly disagree". Please carefully read through each item on your paper and indicate to what extent you agree or disagree.

An autonomous learner is capable of...	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
determining realistic and reachable goals		X		
selecting appropriate methods and techniques to be used		X		
monitoring their own learning process	X			
evaluating the progress of their own learning		X		
Learner profiles: An autonomous learner is...	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
an active participant in the social processes of learning		X		
an active interpreter of new information in terms of what she/he already uniquely knows		X		
intrinsically motivated		X		
perceives him/herself in control of his/her own decision-making	X			
takes responsibility for the outcomes of his/her actions	X			
has confidence in him-/herself		X		

- Can you please tell me why you chose this/these [point at strongly agree statement(s)] characteristic(s) as good ones? Why do you agree with them?
- Why do you think this/these [point at strongly disagree statement(s)] characteristic(s) are not a good fit as a description of an "autonomous learner"? Why do you disagree with them?
[not asked]

Uh, for up here, (reads) 'monitor their own learning process'. To me, an autonomous learner is able to say, 'Okay, I know I learn best by writing notes, so

I will write notes to learn”; whereas the teacher takes a longer time to figure out in their classes, you know, what’s the best learning style for kids in their classes. So, if the kids already know that, I really agree that they can be autonomous ... and if they can transfer those skills to other classes. So, yea, they learn that ... Also, I picked (reads) ‘perceives him- or herself in control of his or her own decision-making’. I understood this as ‘in their learning’. So, like, they know that they need that so they work harder in maths and need to make that decision and be like ‘Okay, I need to put in extra time in math because I need to do that’. And ... (reads) ‘takes responsibility for the outcomes of his or her actions’. So, to me an autonomous learner is able to understand if I don’t study, I am not going to do well, whereas some students who are not that autonomous are not that aware. Like, I cannot study at all and try to wing it, whereas I feel that an autonomous learner really understands himself. That’s why I picked that.

- Do you think you regularly foster autonomy in your classroom?
 - How do you foster autonomy in the classroom? Can you give a concrete example?

Yea, I think the way I do it is through a lot of differentiation and making sure that students have choices and options and control over their learning. And I feel like ownership of learning is a strong way to make an autonomous learner. Like, if you give choice and then they can see that they can do well with that, hopefully they can transfer that knowledge to other areas of their life.

- What kind of materials or resources do you think are suitable for fostering learner autonomy?
 - Think about: classroom displays, handouts, books/library, electronic equipment
[not asked]

I think, for me as a teacher, making them aware of it as well, like the learning styles and things ... I use quite a bit of online resources to help students discover their learning style because in my experience, I didn’t know what my learning style was, like when I think back of when I was in school. I wasn’t aware. But then, when I was in control of my own learning at university, I was like, ‘Oh, I do a lot better if I do this’. So, I try to bring that in at an earlier time, mostly using online resources like learning skills characteristics, or study types. We do that a lot in class. So then they can figure out what’s the best for them. So I have questionnaires ... there is one I think it’s called sixteen ... something ... I can get you the website, and they fill out a survey and then at the end it tells them what should work best for them. So they can kind of use that so they are like ‘Oh, maybe I can use that ... to maybe tape record it’ or something like that.

[NB: The personality questionnaire can be found here:

<https://www.16personalities.com/free-personality-test>]

- **IB:** To what extent do you think the **IB** teacher support materials or other materials on the **OCC** (Online Curriculum Centre) promote learner autonomy in your classroom?

Okay. (long pause) Usually I go outside of the OCC. But, I think there is quite a bit of sample lessons and stuff in there for teachers that they can use that do go

around learner autonomy and I think the learner profile is pretty cool. Like, we've used that in lessons before to show the differences that people have and these are all skills and stuff like that. So, you know, having that as the core of the IB, you can kind of focus on certain aspects of the learner profile for, like, risk-taker, for example ... you know

- To what extent do you differentiate in your classroom?

Well, for me it's a little bit different because I did a two-year program on inclusive education and focusing on differentiation. So, I feel like I'm a bit more knowledgeable in that area because I studied it directly. So, the biggest thing that I try to do, like the whole point, is getting them to reach the curriculum goal without changing it too much, but giving them ownership. So, some of the things I do is giving them choice and I try to do many different assessments ... and I try to ... you know ... even accommodate and modify for those students, so they are still included, they are still learning. Just in a different format. I can give you some direct examples. Like, we did ... students had to write a five-paragraph essay on a certain culture in I&S. And one student, he made a Powerpoint because he was on an IEP [individualized education program] and this was the best thing for him to do. Another student was amazing at making videos, so they had a choice. He presented the same information, but just in a different format. So he was still learning the skills because we were not teaching direct writing skills, but just in a different format. I figured, if I can take it in, then all good (laughs).

- In how far do you think do
 - teachers,
 - parents/the home (cf. SES),
 - peers,
 - the school curriculum (the **IB**)
 - or the school as a whole

have an impact on a learner's autonomy?

I think, of course, the teachers first of because they are the direct line. And, I mean, parents are generally supportive. I think the difference is the parents went to school, like in secondary especially, went to school at a different time when being your own learner and being your own independent person wasn't as ... it was more, you study this, you write this test and then you are done. So, I think it's a bit more challenging for students or for parents to accept that students can go in all kinds of different directions and all still meet the same goal. So, I think, that's a little bit different. And I think the students enjoy it because they are growing up in that type of world now where it's ... you know, where it's the way it is. You know, you find your own path, you are creative and innovative and things that kind of weren't really out there twenty years ago, you know, when some of the parents were in school. So, I think the parents are the most challenged with this (laughs).

- In your teacher training, can you think of any classes or lecturers that emphasized fostering learner autonomy?
 - Was it covered enough/too much?
 - Should it be covered more/less?

- **IB:** What about any **IB PD courses** that you took? Can you think of any concrete examples where an IB PD course emphasized learner autonomy?
[not asked – for personal reasons]

It was ... (laughs) It was quite a while now ... but it was ... Like, we had to do a course in special needs, but part of that course was focused on learner autonomy. But it was only one part of that course, so I had to take ten classroom courses and that was only one. So, it wasn't ... in my teacher's degree it wasn't super focused on. Yea.

- To what extent do you think ICT in the classroom may foster autonomous learning?

Well, my first year here I did a flipped classroom. I did a lot of research and I started to use that in my class to be able to differentiate because I had three grades in one room and I think if it wasn't for the ICT and the fact that they all had laptops and had access to millions of websites, it made my job so much easier to foster their learning. I was really thankful for that. Yay!

- Do you believe that if students have easy access to technology that they also learn more independently? Why / Why not?

Yea, so my philosophy of education kind of now is, it's my job to inspire kids. Because they can learn anything in one second. They don't need teachers anymore with books. If you spark their interest, they can research it. And it's my job to make them want to do that. So for ICT and my teaching philosophy it's great because I know that the information is there. I am no longer the holder of the information, I am the provider of the interest. So, for me, ICT is quite important now. Yea, I am a quite firm believer in it now in education.

- How do you use technology in your classroom and for what purpose?
(Please provide concrete examples)

So, when I was an Individuals and Societies teacher, so two years ago I had a full course load. And I did the flipped classroom and I felt that was the best for me because I could record my own videos of giving my own lesson or other videos that have been made. And class time was mainly for work and for me to help and support the kids. So, that was the biggest example of technology. And when I was a special needs teacher before I moved here, I got a grant and I got twenty iPads and we used technology specifically for special needs students in the areas that they needed help with. So, that was quite a benefit for me. What else ... Oh for me in the library I use technology for students to review books, and that goes with learner autonomy too because they choose what they like and what's important to them. Yea. Lots of ways.

- To what extent do you believe do **international schools** aim to promote learner autonomy through the use of ICT in the classroom?
 - Do you believe that at an **IB World School** does more so than a non-IB school?

Aha ... I think, only because of ... in my experience, all the international schools that I am aware of they definitely do have some sort of education tool, sort of like an iPad or a laptop that goes along the kids' tuition. So, I do think it's a big thing in schools now. I mean, I think for international schools where there is more

finances and money, that allows for more ICT to be involved. I don't think if public schools had the chance they wouldn't do it, I just think it's a financial thing and not a 'we don't want it' kind of thing. But I do think it's definitely in the international school system. Yea.

- To what extent do you believe does freedom (i.e. giving students choices) foster learner autonomy?
 - Do you normally give your students a variety of tasks they can choose from?
Why / Why not?
 - If yes, can you give me an example?

I mean, I think that it all depends on what type of teacher you are. Like, I am pretty big on like 'Go to where you wanna go', as long as we cover the topics that need to be covered. Or as I feel like other teachers are more strict and like 'Okay, this is my classroom and this is what we are doing'. So, definitely depends on the teaching style how much learner autonomy ... I definitely believe in it. So, for me, I've seen quite a lot of progress with kids who you give ownership. So, I am a big believer, but I think it definitely depends on the teacher and probably on the subject. Like, I am lucky with my subjects cause I am pretty free (laughs). So I have the ability to do different projects but I don't know if you are in physics or math if you are a bit more strict and it's harder to do that maybe

Language

Finally, I would like to talk about the language aspect in relation to learner autonomy and your teaching.

- A common statement that can be found in official **IB documents** is the phrase "every teacher is a language teacher". The IB argues that this is the case because at most **IB World Schools** the students' first language is different from the language of instruction.
 - To what extent do you think does this statement hold true at IB schools?
 - Is this something you agree with? Why or why not?

I think it is extremely true because with the IB it's a little tricky because they don't quite mention EAL in the documents. They have a language acquisition. So, you have many many students whose language is not English. So, they are in all regular classes, so the teacher has no choice but to become a language teacher. Because they have to come down to the students' level of English because they have to explain it. So yea, I agree, that's true in every course. Like, we have an exorbitant amount of students who are at lower level English skills, so the teachers just automatically have to if they want to teach the student. I mean, I have had people come and say 'I can't teach this kid' and I am actually like 'Well, yes you can. You just have to find a way to do it through differentiation'. But anyway, that's another story there (laughs)

- In how far does teaching your classes in English influence your teaching?
[not asked]
- How would you describe the language proficiency of your students?

Hm... It's hard ... Because I look at it through an EAL level. In an EAL setting, they are doing marvelous. Because when they started in intensive [an intensive EAL program at the school], which most of them were, compared to that, they are fabulous. On a grand scale of where they should be, I think they are lower. I think we are generally lower across the board because we have very few native speakers. So, it's definitely lower than if you did a comparison, you know. Yea.

- Do you think that the way you teach would be significantly different if most of your students' first language were English?

Extremely. Yea. I would be able to do a lot of more higher level tasks that I just feel like I can't do here because I don't want to leave anyone out and I want to make sure everybody is on the same understanding. Definitely.

- To what extent do you pay attention to the language your students use in the classroom and the work they submit?
[not asked because participant mostly teaches EAL classes]

- For non-English teachers: To what extent do you consider yourself a language teacher (when not teaching a language class)?
[not asked because EAL instructor]
- To what extent would you say does teaching your students in a language that is different from their first language constitute a barrier for autonomous learning?
 - Do you think your students could be more autonomous or independent if there wasn't such a language barrier? Why or why not?

It's difficult to explain (laughs) because it's even hard to explain what it is. Because sometimes the definitions are ... it's hard to explain something abstract such as autonomous learning. So even getting across what it is is a little more challenging. And even trying to translate things into their language ... it's not an easy task as if it was like 'addition' or 'subtraction'. It's more of an abstract thing. So, yea it is definitely more an abstract thing to explain it to the students. So like, a lot of times when I talk about autonomy and the reason why I do it, I want the kids to understand why they want to become this ... like why does this person get to do a different thing, why are we choosing whatever, Because like, you know I like to explain the reason behind it and doing that with EALs, it's much more challenging because they can't make the connection to it. Yea.

- [Only if question has not been answered before] [not asked]
What kind of additional resources do you use to help your students when they struggle with language?
 - i.e. How do you scaffold learning in your classroom?
 - (How) do you differentiate in your classroom?

Learner Autonomy Definitions

The table below is an overview of all definitions on learner autonomy provided by the participants in the interview after being asked the following question:

- In your own words, what does “learner autonomy” mean to you?
 - Can you give me a very brief summary of what is meant by the term “learner autonomy”?

Interview	Definition
Pilot	<i>Ya, ya, that's a good question. I think the ultimate goal of education – and this is quite a big thing but I really believe in it - is for students to become independent and to actually... that learning doesn't stop when they go home for the day or when they leave my classroom, but that they actually take it with them and that they want to learn more and they go home and they really want to continue to learn. Not just in school, but that they continue after school, after they have finished school and move on to university and move on with life. So I think that's kind of my personal goal for them... for them to just like... to have that motivation to continue to learn throughout their whole life.</i>
1	<i>To me learner autonomy means that students are more self-directed, they are in charge of their learning, they are not just responding to explicit instructions given by their teacher, but they have the space to ... self-regulate and to make their own decisions with respect to their education.</i>

2	<p><i>You know, I have come across that term in my training and I feel really bad now because I can't explain to you now in my own words what it means. What does it mean?</i></p> <p>Well, there are several closely related concepts to it, maybe you are familiar with terms such as “self-directed learning” –</p> <p><i>Oh oh okay. So that's probably related to developing assessment-capable learners?</i></p> <p>Uhm, can you explain what exactly you mean by that?</p> <p><i>So, an assessment-capable learner is somebody that understands the learning journey that they are going to take, they understand the steps they are going to take, and as they are on this learning journey, they know where they are. They know their steps and they know their next steps</i></p>
3	<p><i>I think, ... the learners' ability to do things his own way. And not necessarily choosing what he is going to learn but maybe to a certain extent that too, but within a classroom he or she chooses how he is going to go about or what he is going to do pretty much. So, I guess that would mean ... what he is going to do in order to ... to do what is required of him. There are certain requirements, but how he is going to get to this is his choice. So the freedom of doing things his or her own way.</i></p>
4	<p><i>To me ... okay, so learner autonomy would be more like how students make connections to their work, how well they understand it on their own without me being the person who gives them all the guidance telling them what they need to do.</i></p>

STUDENT INTERVIEWS

Interview Guide

Background Information

First, I would like to start asking you a few questions about your school and your background. This is for me to get a better idea of you as an internationally-minded student.

Question	Answer
Grade level / age group <i>What grade are you in? How old are you?</i>	
Curriculum at school <i>What curricula or academic programs does your school offer? (Besides the IB).</i>	
Language of instruction at school <i>What is the language of instruction at your school? Are there any other languages used (besides in foreign language classes)?</i>	
Number of students <i>How many students are enrolled in your school?</i>	
Number of faculty members <i>How many faculty members does your school employ?</i>	
Other staff members <i>How many other staff members does your school employ? For example: any kind of teaching support staff, IT, maintenance, security, kitchen staff etc.</i>	
Facilities & Equipment <i>What kind of facilities does your school offer?</i> <i>What kind of equipment is available at your school and in the classrooms? (e.g. projector, laptops, tablets etc)</i>	
Other information about the school (certain programs offered, specializations, school environment etc) <i>Is there anything else you can tell me about your school? Does your school offer any additional programs? Are there any specializations? What is your school environment like? What is it that makes your school unique or different from other schools you have been to?</i>	

Experience at school <i>How long have you been attending this school?</i>	
Subjects <i>What subjects are you taking this year (at SL or HL)?</i>	
Favorite subject/class <i>What is your favorite subject or class and why?</i>	
Least favorite subject/class <i>What is your least favorite subject or class and why?</i>	
Satisfaction with school <i>Are you generally happy with the school you are currently attending? Why or why not?</i>	
Gender <i>male / female / other</i>	

Learner autonomy

The overall research question of my topic is: “How can learner autonomy be fostered at IB schools?”. If you don’t know the term “learner autonomy”, you might be familiar with similar concepts such as “self-directed learning”, “independent learning”, or “self-regulation”.

*I will ask you a few questions about learner autonomy in relation to your school and the curriculum – **the International Baccalaureate program** – it offers.*

- First of all, have you ever heard of the term “learner autonomy” or any of its related concepts: “self-directed learning”, “independent learning”, or “self-regulation”?
 - [if YES]: Can you try to explain in your own words what learning autonomously means and what kind of characteristics an autonomous learner should have?
 - [if NO → move on to next question]

- I will give you now a short questionnaire that contains characteristics often associated with autonomous learners. This will also give you better idea of what is meant by “learner autonomy”. Please take a moment to read through each of the questions and try to evaluate how good you think you are at these things.
[hand over questionnaire]

I can...	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
determine realistic and reachable goals for school				
select appropriate methods and techniques to study and complete work effectively				
monitor my own learning				
evaluate the progress of my own learning				
I...	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
get actively involved in social aspects of learning (e.g. group or pair work, discussions, collaborating/working together)				
interpret new information in a way that activates my prior knowledge of the subject				
am intrinsically motivated				
am in control of my own decision-making				
take responsibility for the outcomes of my actions				
have confidence in myself when it comes to my school work				

- Thank you for taking your time. [take questionnaire and look at it so that the participant can also see].
Now I want you to look at your answers and think about your reasoning. Why do you think that this [point at Strongly Agree and Agree items] is something you are good at or you generally do? And why do you think is this [point at Disagree and Strongly Disagree items] something you are not good at or you generally do not do?
 - [eliciting more specific information] Can you come up with an example or situation for that?
 - [Discuss questionnaire with participant, make sure participant can see questionnaire the entire time and refer to it]

Learner profiles

- Here is a list of **IB learner profiles** [hand official IB document with page of learner profiles]. Take a look at those learner profiles and the list of characteristics of

autonomous learners [point at questionnaire]. Which of these 10 attributes – if any - do you think are representative of promoting learner autonomy?

- You may choose as many or as few as you want.
- If you think that all of them or none of them represent learner autonomy, that is also fine.
- Can you explain why you think this attribute is representative / not representative of learner autonomy?

Teachers

- Now I would like to talk to you about your teachers and the way they teach. When you look at the items of the questionnaire, can you think of a teacher who you believe is particularly eager to promote these qualities in his or her students? You do not need to mention his or her name.
 - If NO: Can you maybe think of teachers who you believe attempt to promote at least one of those qualities in their students?
 - If YES: What are some ways in which he or she promotes these qualities? Can you think of a concrete example or a situation in which he or she has promoted these qualities?
 - What kind of materials does/did he or she use for that? (e.g. handouts, graphic organizers, posted links on the school's learning platform, videos, classroom displays, stories, other resources or ways of teaching)

Differentiation

- In most classrooms, you usually have students who are a bit better than the rest, some who struggle a bit more with the subject than the rest, and then there are some who are something in-between and are neither particularly good or bad in the subject. How well do you think do your teachers deal with such mixed-ability groups? In other words, in what ways do you think do your teachers differentiate among students in their classroom?
 - What kind of materials does/did he or she use for that? (e.g. handouts, graphic organizers, posted links on the school's learning platform, videos, classroom displays, stories, other resources or ways of teaching)

ICT

- To what extent do you believe that access to the internet, a computer, and other electronic devices can help you become a more autonomous learner?
 - Do you believe that if you had not the possibility to use information and communication technology for school you would be less autonomous in your learning?

- To what extent do your teachers use information and communication technology in their classroom to promote learner autonomy (i.e. help you learn more independently)?

Freedom

- To what extent do you think it is important for teachers to provide choices of different tasks to promote learner autonomy (i.e. help you learn more independently)? Do you think that if a teacher provides a variety of choices it helps students become more autonomous in their learning?
 - Do your teachers normally give you a variety of tasks to choose from? Or can you think of a teacher who usually provides a range of choices? Again, there is no need to mention the name of that teacher.
 - What kind of tasks and in what situations?
 - Why do you think they do that?

Language

As the language of instruction at this school is English, a language that is different from most students' first language, I would like to ask you a few questions about that.

- In how far do you think does being taught in English influence your learning?
 - Do you think it would be much different if everything was taught in your native language? Why or why not?
 - Do you think it would be much easier for you? Would it have a huge impact on your grades?
- To what extent do your subject teachers, i.e. any teacher who is not teaching you a language, pay attention to language aspects
 - in the classroom?
 - outside of the classroom / in homework assignments?
- Can you think of any resources your teachers use in order to help you or other students with the language barrier?
(e.g. handouts, graphic organizers, posted links on the school's learning platform, videos, classroom displays, stories, other resources or ways of teaching)

Interview 1

Background Information

First, I would like to start asking you a few questions about your school and your background. This is for me to get a better idea of you as an internationally-minded student.

Question	Answer
Grade level / age group <i>What grade are you in? How old are you?</i>	Grade 12, 17 years old
Curriculum at school <i>What curricula or academic programs does your school offer? (Besides the IB).</i>	IB
Language of instruction at school <i>What is the language of instruction at your school? Are there any other languages used (besides in foreign language classes)?</i>	English
Number of students <i>How many students are enrolled in your school?</i>	fewer than 500
Number of faculty members <i>How many faculty members does your school employ?</i>	fewer than 50
Other staff members <i>How many other staff members does your school employ? For example: any kind of teaching support staff, IT, maintenance, security, kitchen staff etc.</i>	boarding staff, assistants, kitchen staff, maintenance, IT staff, coordinators, administration, interns
Facilities & Equipment <i>What kind of facilities does your school offer? What kind of equipment is available at your school and in the classrooms? (e.g. projector, laptops, tablets etc)</i>	Gyms, science labs, kitchen/canteen, boarding facilities, music rooms and music equipment, dance rooms

Other information about the school (certain programs offered, specializations, school environment etc) <i>Is there anything else you can tell me about your school? Does your school offer any additional programs? Are there any specializations? What is your school environment like? What is it that makes your school unique or different from other schools you have been to?</i>	Only IB boarding school in the area; *censored*
Experience at school <i>How long have you been attending this school?</i>	3 rd year now; since grade 10
Subjects <i>What subjects are you taking this year (at SL or HL)?</i>	SL: Business, Biology, German ab initio HL: Math, Physics, English A
Favorite subject/class <i>What is your favorite subject or class and why?</i>	English or Biology; good teachers (friendly, amazing) Physics because subject is interesting
Least favorite subject/class <i>What is your least favorite subject or class and why?</i>	No least favorite subject; there is something good in each of them;
Satisfaction with school <i>Are you generally happy with the school you are currently attending? Why or why not?</i>	Yes, generally happy. All staff members and most students are very friendly and good friends; roommate also studies physics so we collaborate a lot; good environment to study in; (supportive teachers, student should show initiative, but T also push them); fan of studying collectively; living in boarding is great b/c room mate also has same subject; good location;
Gender <i>male / female / other</i>	male

Learner autonomy

The overall research question of my topic is: “How can learner autonomy be fostered at IB schools?”. If you don’t know the term “learner autonomy”, you might be familiar with similar concepts such as “self-directed learning”, “independent learning”, or “self-regulation”.

*I will ask you a few questions about learner autonomy in relation to your school and the curriculum – **the International Baccalaureate program** – it offers.*

- First of all, have you ever heard of the term “learner autonomy” or any of its related concepts: “self-directed learning”, “independent learning”, or “self-regulation”?

Yes, both of the term and the related concepts.

- [if YES]: Can you try to explain in your own words what learning autonomously means and what kind of characteristics an autonomous learner should have?
- [if NO → move on to next question]

Yea, it's probably with learning where the student has most control and control over planning and carrying out all the actions related to studying and... yea... yea pretty much. And characteristics... they should probably have a lot of self-control, ... coherency, ... self-sustainment... what else.... concentration, a lot of concentration and being self-critical is very important I think. Yea... those are the main traits I think.

- I will give you now a short questionnaire that contains characteristics often associated with autonomous learners. This will also give you better idea of what is meant by “learner autonomy”. Please take a moment to read through each of the questions and try to evaluate how good you think you are at these things.
[hand over questionnaire]

I can...	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
determine realistic and reachable goals for school		X		
select appropriate methods and techniques to study and complete work effectively			X	
monitor my own learning		X		
evaluate the progress of my own learning			X	
I...	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
get actively involved in social aspects of learning (e.g. group or pair work, discussions, collaborating/working together)	X			
interpret new information in a way that activates my prior knowledge of the subject		X		
am intrinsically motivated		X		
am in control of my own decision-making		X		
take responsibility for the outcomes of my actions	X			
have confidence in myself when it comes to my school work		X		

- Thank you for taking your time. [take questionnaire and look at it so that the participant can also see].

Now I want you to look at your answers and think about your reasoning. Why do you think that this [point at Strongly Agree and Agree items] is something you are good at or you generally do? And why do you think is this [point at Disagree and Strongly Disagree items] something you are not good at or you generally do not do?

Okay.. let's maybe switch that to disagree I guess [points at "intrinsically motivated"]. I am intrinsically motivated... I don't know. It's a hard one. (long pause) Hm.. okay no let's keep it, let's keep agree. Okay. Uhm... (pause). Determine realistic and reachable goals for schools... I agree with that because.. I don't know because I feel that if I wasn't doing that I wouldn't be where I am right now because one of the key... skills....

And the second one [points at "select appropriate methods and techniques to study and complete work effectively"] you said disagree.

Yea I feel like I am not very efficient sometimes with my school work. Probably because I can't allocate time properly, when I am most productive, when I am least productive and often at all just mix up into one horrible snowball of like trying to get work done in the least amount of time and eventually not being very productive at it.

What about the other one, (reads) "evaluate the progress of my own learning"? Do I need to answer 'monitor my own learning'?

Yes, if you want to you can

Yea okay.. I monitor my own learning [participant clearly wants to move to next questions] (reads) 'evaluate the progress of my own learning' disagree because I think uh... it's a little bit hard to be... critical about things I do all the times... but I like try my best and stuff but I think I can improve, so I disagree... yup (reads) 'get actively involved in social aspects of learning'. Yea as I said, working together and working collaboratively I think is the best way of studying because that's when all the interaction happens and you can kind of.... Include yourself into discussion and let your thoughts out and hear thoughts from other people and mix it all up in your head and somehow remember it better or work with it in the future. Uhm... (reads) 'activates my prior knowledge of the subject'. Yea it's always good if the new information is somehow related to what you previously learned because then it kind of builds a chain and you can just logically follow everything through what's going on. (reads) 'I am intrinsically motivated'. Yea, I am. I guess... (reads) 'I am in control of my own decision-making'. I am in control of my own decision-making but if there was something between 'agree' and 'disagree' I would probably choose that because it's... yea I am not quite sure.... Yea... (long pause) circumstances.... and stuff. (reads) 'take responsibility for the outcomes of my actions'. I do and I think.... Yea... because eventually it all comes down to what I choose to do or what I choose to ignore and not to do and therefore I am the one to blame, so fair enough. (reads) 'have confidence in myself when it comes to my school work'. Yea, most of the time because I am. If I am under pressure I am trying to do my best... (laughs). Overall... so I think I have a certain amount of confidence about it.

Okay, thanks. Can you come up with some specific situations where for instance you found it very easy or very difficult to do something? Like, you mentioned a lot about your collaboration with your room mate for instance. What kind of learning happens when you work together?

Yea, I said, interaction and thinking... It's like two brains are always better than one brain. Especially when you look at challenging problems like in physics or maths and maybe you need like different perspectives or just different approaches to the problem... so that's important. That's very good when two people are collaborating... or more... yea because it's sharing ideas, come up with something new, plus you can always learn things that you don't know from another person and vice-versa. You can teach the person things that you know.

Okay, and if we look at (reads) "take responsibility for the outcomes of my actions". Can you think of a specific situation where you think you took responsibility for your actions? This could be at school, this could be also somewhere else.

Yea... okay... uhm... (pause) uhm... I mean, yea, school experience.... Okay... what do we have.... Uhm... (pause) I need some minutes to think... (long pause)

If you can't come up with something it's –

Yea I... can't come up with something. My brain is a bit-

Okay, that's all right.

Learner profiles

- Here is a list of **IB learner profiles** [hand official IB document with page of learner profiles]. Take a look at those learner profiles and the list of characteristics of autonomous learners [point at questionnaire]. Which of these 10 attributes – if any - do you think are representative of promoting learner autonomy?
 - You may choose as many or as few as you want.
 - If you think that all of them or none of them represent learner autonomy, that is also fine.
 - Can you explain why you think this attribute is representative / not representative of learner autonomy?

OK...inquirers...thinkers (pause) knowledgeable, balanced and reflective... Yeah I think those are the main ones. Yeah... inquirers because... there's I think its directly related to motivation that a person is driven by when studying, learning whatever... Yeah so if there is no motivation like that then there's pretty much nothing... to make you learn. OK knowledgeable... is a very strange point. I mean exploring knowledge, isn't that what learning is all about in the first place? Understanding things and then understanding why you understand them so you can apply the knowledge or somehow find it useful ...Thinkers... Yeah thinkers again its all about understanding how and why certain aspects of whatever you're learning are important and how they can be applied or can be found useful so I think again its important overall not only for autonomous learning but also the whole picture. And these two I think are directly related to autonomous learning, balanced and reflective because... all of them kind of go into one group of self-

control and ...self-management because if you're reflective you know which direction you need to move and if you're balanced you know how to move in that direction.

Teachers

- Now I would like to talk to you about your teachers and the way they teach. When you look at the items of the questionnaire, can you think of a teacher who you believe is particularly eager to promote these qualities in his or her students? You do not need to mention his or her name.

Yup!

- If NO: Can you maybe think of teachers who you believe attempt to promote at least one of those qualities in their students?
- If YES: What are some ways in which he or she promotes these qualities? Can you think of a concrete example or a situation in which he or she has promoted these qualities?

Yeah... uhm (long pause)

- What kind of materials does/did he or she use for that? (e.g. handouts, graphic organizers, posted links on the school's learning platform, videos, classroom displays, stories, other resources or ways of teaching)

Yeah...OK... Yeah its like (pause) he understands the way students are in 12th grade like the majority of students and he understands the way they think and they learn and therefore the methods he uses are very practical and they're very... like they make a lot of sense. They're not something above the head so you don't need to like... like he understands how to work with students therefore he determines realistic and reachable goals. Yea... if that makes sense.

When you say he understands how students learn, can you be more specific about this? Like, can you think of a particular situation or a particular lesson where he's shown all these things?

OK, let's... say he knows that the certain subject that he teaches can sometimes be a bit tedious because it's a lot of remembering. So he can somehow make it interesting or explain it in such a way that the person just remembers it. I guess its also related to personal charisma and stuff but yeah that's what I mean; giving the material in a way that people would remember it.

So like what, are you talking about handouts right now?

No, more theoretical material like... remembering information...I don't know an example of a subject that has that. For example, business management or history; it's a lot of remembering concepts or events or certain information, and it's kind of hard to put it all in your head but if a teacher gives all that information in such a way that you can kind of group it in your brain in different parts so it's not like all messed up an... put together in your brain but very separate and therefore its very organized. (long pause) Moving on?

Yea... As in we're not really going through all of these individually [pointing at learner characteristics] but more like look at all of that. We're looking for a teacher who does all of that.

All of it? Oh ... (laughs) You should have told me earlier, come on. (Long pause) Yeah, OK. I can ... All of it or most of it.

Are we talking about the same teacher now?

No, I can come up with multiple teachers because-

All right, when you look at all of them, can you come up with a teacher who does that and how does he or she foster autonomous learning?

Yes. Ok, I can. I can think of a teacher but how does he or she foster autonomous learning... let me think.

How does he or she realize all these things?

Yeah but its hard! (laughs)

Like, think of things they put on ManageBac, think of ... uhm... this could be stories they tell in the classroom, this could be displays in the classroom. Any kind of resources they use. Videos, handouts.

Uhm ... hm ... okay ... for example ... in maths ... I'll talk about math more specific, because there if we're given a certain material and we're explained how it works so the teacher explains everything, all the theoretical parts, gives us certain examples, then let's say that over one day as homework we have to go through the whole exercise like on our own. And the problem with maths higher level is that whatever you study in class, it's always gonna be... it's not going to be the same on the test and that's the thing. Like you can... like the teacher can only give you so much and then the teacher knows that you know that you need to study a lot by yourself that you need to somehow work with the things that you have... so you're able to manipulate with all the rules or formulas or whatever. And I think that's one of the examples when... the teacher prepares you but only to a certain extent and... just because it's very limited what he can do and... and then ... yeah you don't really have a choice.

Is there anything else that you want to say about this?

No not really. (laughs)

Differentiation

- In most classrooms, you usually have students who are a bit better than the rest, some who struggle a bit more with the subject than the rest, and then there are some who are something in-between and are neither particularly good or bad in the subject. How well do you think do your teachers deal with such mixed-ability groups? In other words, in what ways do you think do your teachers differentiate among students in their classroom? [not asked because question seemed too complex for this participant]
 - What kind of materials does/did he or she use for that? (e.g. handouts, graphic organizers, posted links on the school's learning platform, videos, classroom displays, stories, other resources or ways of teaching) [not asked because question seemed too complex for this participant]

ICT

- To what extent do you believe that access to the internet, a computer, and other electronic devices can help you become a more autonomous learner?

To a huge extent. I don't remember the last time I went to a library and opened a book there. Why would I if I have internet?

- Do you believe that if you had not the possibility to use information and communication technology for school you would be less autonomous in your learning?

I don't know... like, starting from now on or forever? Like because let's say that I'm using sources like internet for... 3 years in a row and then suddenly boom I'm not allowed to use it anymore then yeah I'll be very confused and I'll probably drop my autonomous learning skills very quickly. But I actually think that if from the very beginning I was not allowed to use any of those things and... just ... I think I would be more productive... as an autonomous learner because that would require more effort.

- To what extent do your teachers use information and communication technology in their classroom to promote learner autonomy (i.e. help you learn more independently)?

OK, first of all, ManageBac. Great thing you have the access from any basically point in this school or actually world to all your grades, to all your tasks, to everything the teacher has in mind for the students. It's very comfortable, plus especially if the teacher updates the information periodically and then they upload different sources there, past papers for example in physics and maths for us to work on so we can practice for the exams... What else? (long pause) Yeah we use one resource called Cognity in maths, very useful as well. First of all because the problems there are somewhat different to the problems in the book, so a bigger variation... Yeah, teachers usually promote using technology.

Freedom

- To what extent do you think it is important for teachers to provide choices of different tasks to promote learner autonomy (i.e. help you learn more independently)? Do you think that if a teacher provides a variety of choices it helps students become more autonomous in their learning?

I think by itself it's not very productive or useful but if you actually mix it up with the version where you don't have a choice I think it's the best thing possible because at first the student can improve the skills that he thinks are necessary. For example, an English paper, in the exams we will be allowed to choose amongst 6 topics and some topics are clearly more difficult than others, and who in the world knows what topics we're going to get? They can be super hard, all of them or they can be easy. So how we do it is that often we're given printouts of

exams from previous years where we can choose our topic, but then not so long ago we were given an exam where all the topics are like twice harder than usual, all of them where you don't really have... because there's always that one little choice where you can just pick it and then you can write whatever is going to work... Yeah, so I think mixing those two ways of learning is the best.

Is this something that a lot of your teachers do, that you're familiar with? To give you choices in your tests?

No, not really actually. That was the only example I could think of, because all the other subjects that I do are quite limited and like ... because there are a lot of things that you need to know and you just got to know them all.

How about the options that you chose in your subjects? Who chose them?

Oh, for example... maths, calculus I think because... we had an option in biology, physics and maths, well I had an option and... I think it was equally a decision of the class and of the teacher because the teacher knows what he's the best at tutoring and the students know what they want to study. But of course, it's more dependent on the students' opinion which way that they want to go, and then if it matches with the topic that the teachers best at tutoring then it's perfect. But yeah, I heard that some guys in chemistry had a problem that a few students wanted to do that and then other students wanted to do this and then eventually they were like fighting over it for half a year so I don't know how useful it is. Like, if its more personal then yes but if a whole group needs to come up with a decision that fits everyone it's a bit harder because people have different opinions.

- Do your teachers normally give you a variety of tasks to choose from? Or can you think of a teacher who usually provides a range of choices? Again, there is no need to mention the name of that teacher. [not asked, already answered]
 - What kind of tasks and in what situations? [not asked, already answered]
 - Why do you think they do that? [not asked, already answered]

Language

As the language of instruction at this school is English, a language that is different from most students' first language, I would like to ask you a few questions about that.

- In how far do you think does being taught in English influence your learning?
 - Do you think it would be much different if everything was taught in your native language? Why or why not?

*I don't know actually. Its very interesting because now understanding certain subjects in English is way easier than understanding them in *censored*[participant's first language] for example... I guess it comes with experience.*

So English is actually easier for you?

Well now, definitely. 3 years ago probably not because I kind of spent 3 years learning only in English.

Do you think it would have an effect on your grade if you were taught in

censored[participant's first language]?

*Actually, I think I would be less productive because I remember my experience of studying in *censored*[participant's first language] and it wasn't the best. Like, I look at the definition in a physics book and I'm like 'Woah, lots of scientific words'. In English I think it's a bit easier overall ... probably because the language is easier.*

- Do you think it would be much easier for you? Would it have a huge impact on your grades? [not asked, see question above]

- To what extent do your subject teachers, i.e. any teacher who is not teaching you a language, pay attention to language aspects

- in the classroom?

Yeah I guess... for example, explaining topics... to students... Wait, we have students with different levels of English obviously so... its probably easier for some than others to understand some topics. Therefore, teachers often try to put it in simpler words and like, to give a more clear picture for all students, not just the ones with the better level of English.

How do they make it easier for weaker students? Do they use different words?

Do they explain it again?

Yeah with rephrasing, using ... I don't know, more simple grammar, simpler structures... yeah just overall not that complicated.

- outside of the classroom / in homework assignments?

I don't really know because I don't think I ever encountered those issues... no I don't think this is a very prominent thing. Usually when students don't understand something they can just google the definition in the dictionary and then they understand it.

- Can you think of any resources your teachers use in order to help you or other students with the language barrier? [not asked]
(e.g. handouts, graphic organizers, posted links on the school's learning platform, videos, classroom displays, stories, other resources or ways of teaching)

Interview 2

Background Information

First, I would like to start asking you a few questions about your school and your background. This is for me to get a better idea of you as an internationally-minded student.

Question	Answer
Grade level / age group <i>What grade are you in? How old are you?</i>	Grade 12, 17 years old
Curriculum at school <i>What curricula or academic programs does your school offer? (Besides the IB).</i>	IB
Language of instruction at school <i>What is the language of instruction at your school? Are there any other languages used (besides in foreign language classes)?</i>	English
Number of students <i>How many students are enrolled in your school?</i>	Fewer than 500
Number of faculty members <i>How many faculty members does your school employ?</i>	Fewer than 50
Other staff members <i>How many other staff members does your school employ? For example: any kind of teaching support staff, IT, maintenance, security, kitchen staff etc.</i>	librarian, boarding staff, admin staff, IT, music instructors, other instructors for ASAs
Facilities & Equipment <i>What kind of facilities does your school offer? What kind of equipment is available at your school and in the classrooms? (e.g. projector, laptops, tablets etc)</i>	gyms, science labs, kitchen/canteen, boarding facilities, music rooms and music equipment, dance rooms
Other information about the school (certain programs offered, specializations, school environment etc) <i>Is there anything else you can tell me about your school? Does your school offer any additional programs? Are there any specializations? What is your school environment like? What is it that makes your school unique or different from other schools you have been to?</i>	There are 40 or 50 different nationalities; it is a boarding school; it offers IB; very small school – leads to open discussions in class which improves critical thinking

Experience at school <i>How long have you been attending this school?</i>	4 th year now
Subjects <i>What subjects are you taking this year (at SL or HL)?</i>	SL: English language and literature, German acquisition, history HL: math, physics, chemistry
Favorite subject/class <i>What is your favorite subject or class and why?</i>	History and physics because they develop critical thinking Physics forces you to stretch your mind History forces you to analyze different perspectives and come up with own ideas
Least favorite subject/class <i>What is your least favorite subject or class and why?</i>	chemistry because it is too abstract, insufficient explanation of content; lots of things to remember
Satisfaction with school <i>Are you generally happy with the school you are currently attending? Why or why not?</i>	Yes, quite happy. Learning environment good, people around me are supportive
Gender <i>male / female / other</i>	male

Learner autonomy

The overall research question of my topic is: “How can learner autonomy be fostered at IB schools?”. If you don’t know the term “learner autonomy”, you might be familiar with similar concepts such as “self-directed learning”, “independent learning”, or “self-regulation”.

*I will ask you a few questions about learner autonomy in relation to your school and the curriculum – **the International Baccalaureate program** – it offers.*

- First of all, have you ever heard of the term “learner autonomy” or any of its related concepts: “self-directed learning”, “independent learning”, or “self-regulation”?

Yes

- [if YES]: Can you try to explain in your own words what learning autonomously means and what kind of characteristics an autonomous learner should have?
- [if NO → move on to next question]

I guess well first of all a good example of it would be probably like not giving the fish but teaching people to fish. Perhaps that would be one idea. So that, like, I find self-directed learning is not only learning the content from the subject but also... deepening your understanding and even developing your skills to learn in general so I guess, self-directed learning is not something that you just simply listen to class... sit and listen in class and... remember what the teacher says but perhaps for instance, I don’t know develop your understandings from it or even like... when you’re working independently you don’t... only do the homework but

you actually try to understand something. It's I guess a good example of self-directed learning. That's what it means to me because I hate to just remember the topics. I can't do it personally. So it's quite crucial for me.

- I will give you now a short questionnaire that contains characteristics often associated with autonomous learners. This will also give you better idea of what is meant by “learner autonomy”. Please take a moment to read through each of the questions and try to evaluate how good you think you are at these things.

[hand over questionnaire]

I can...	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
determine realistic and reachable goals for school		X		
select appropriate methods and techniques to study and complete work effectively		X		
monitor my own learning		X		
evaluate the progress of my own learning	X			
I...	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
get actively involved in social aspects of learning (e.g. group or pair work, discussions, collaborating/working together)		X		
interpret new information in a way that activates my prior knowledge of the subject	X			
am intrinsically motivated	X			
am in control of my own decision-making	X			
take responsibility for the outcomes of my actions	X			
have confidence in myself when it comes to my school work	X			

- Thank you for taking your time. [take questionnaire and look at it so that the participant can also see].

Now I want you to look at your answers and think about your reasoning. Why do you think that this [point at Strongly Agree and Agree items] is something you are good at or you generally do? And why do you think is this [point at Disagree and Strongly Disagree items] something you are not good at or you generally do not do?

So first of all, I would go to the ones where I said agree so perhaps not strongly agree, so for instance (reads) 'determine realistic and reachable goals for school'. It's not that I'm bad at it, I think I'm quite good at it. However, I sometimes feel like I have over-expectations for myself when it comes to schoolwork... So there I can I guess agree to it. (reads) 'select appropriate methods and techniques to study and complete work effectively'. Effectively, that part I strongly agree. However I'm still kind of searching for learning methods so, like, I'm still not there. I discovered recently that... social learning, so working in pairs and stuff is actually quite effective for me, but I think I can still develop it further to better learning methods. So I agree to it. (reads) 'monitor my own learning'. I mean in the end I do complete all my own work, generally meeting my expectations. However, again I can probably do slightly better than that so I guess I agree to it. (reads) get actively involved in social aspects of learning. That's what I started recently so... I guess I agree to it. I found that it's quite effective to me. However, I still think, like, I can kind of, do a bit more of it. So (reads) 'evaluate the progress of my own learning'. I think I am quite a critical thinker. Even about myself. So I guess, like, I might not want to agree to it but I know exactly where I'm at I suppose. Not that I'm necessarily happy with it but I guess I can evaluate it quite effectively. (reads) 'interpret new information in a way that activates my prior knowledge of the subject'. That's kind of why I like physics for instance, also chemistry because it basically deepens my understanding of what I know, gives an explanation to what I know and I really like that. Intrinsically motivated... Yeah so I am definitely motivated in this way. (reads) 'I'm in control of my own decision making'. Well... I mean I guess that applies also for academics but generally speaking... generally speaking first of all the paths I've taken was mainly what I've controlled in terms of my decision making and that also applies to academics so generally speaking I think I'm good so also for academics I'm good at it. (reads) 'I take responsibility for the outcomes of my actions'. Well again, if I'm taking my own decisions then I should take responsibility so... (reads) 'have confidence in myself when it comes to my schoolwork'. Yeah

Learner profiles

- Here is a list of **IB learner profiles** [hand official IB document with page of learner profiles]. Take a look at those learner profiles and the list of characteristics of autonomous learners [point at questionnaire]. Which of these 10 attributes – if any - do you think are representative of promoting learner autonomy?
 - You may choose as many or as few as you want.
 - If you think that all of them or none of them represent learner autonomy, that is also fine.
 - Can you explain why you think this attribute is representative / not representative of learner autonomy?

Inquirers. Well... I suppose inquirers is also kind of related to thinkers. Well in order to be an active learner, I suppose you kind of need to be curious about learning like I myself am, I think. I personally enjoy, well learning new concepts. Well for instance, particularly in physics and the area of science. So I guess inquirers is crucial otherwise there isn't much point taking IB because it's basically about learning and learning to learn I suppose. Risk-takers also quite important in the sense that well, taking IB in itself might even be a risk because it is after all quite a hard curriculum. There is a fairly high chance that you don't

pass it, so that in itself is a risk-taker... I guess also, it's also about the way you think. For example you can see in physics that many physicists didn't want to accept new ideas such as quantum physics. That's something you need to be able to do in IB because, well I mean there are so many different concepts that you need to explore and you can't just remember it, you need to take the risk and take a step further to actually understand the concept and accepting it even. Reflective I guess is also important in evaluating your own way of learning... As I've said, IB is probably something that you learn to learn, and so in order to learn, you kind of need to reflect on what you did good and bad. You can see this in pretty much every single subject ever, particularly CAS, which is the core component so, I mean CAS reflection is what makes you pass, so being reflective is definitely also a crucial part of IB I think.

You didn't put anything for knowledgeable. Why?

This is kind of the one I feel slightly weird about in IB profile in the sense that if you are a thinker, then ... well knowledge comes with it I think, and so being knowledgeable in itself, like, trying to be knowledgeable is basically just remembering stuff to me. Like, knowledgeable is something that comes with thinkers for instance or inquirers and so I don't really see the importance of being knowledgeable because you are in the first place.

And then you also put communicators, principled and caring and balanced. Which one of those, you don't have to talk about all of them but pick one maybe that sticks out that is not very representative or not very much representative of an autonomous learner?

I guess caring... because for instance the way I, well caring is obviously important in the sense that, for instance what you learn in science is about environmental issues etcetera. So I guess is, well it's definitely an important thing as a person and so it's also crucial for IB I guess because you're trying to shape a person... but caring, I guess it's not really to do with learning method, it's about what IB tries to teach you, I guess... The way I try to do it is kind of weird but I try to basically teach others because I'm generally speaking quite good at academics I think so I try to teach others. Not sure that's caring but, I don't know, I try to classify that as caring.

What about communicators?

Also crucial but I don't think it's represented that much in here... because it's mainly about the actions you take... I mean you talk about the social learning but I think you need to involve a bit more... because in IB, I don't really think you can pass IB yourself, like I definitely need the support of others for instance to pass IB, so that's... another crucial part in the statements that you should perhaps add.

Is there anything else you would like to add?

Similar thing for balanced I guess. Maybe I could have put something like taking your own decision into balanced but I mean again like, taking six subjects from different areas in itself is balanced so you can see that balanced kind of stands out. You can also see this in CAS and TOK even Extended Essay to a certain sense. So I guess balanced is the one that actually stands out quite a bit

alongside inquirers and stuff but I don't think its represented that much at the same time.

Teachers

- Now I would like to talk to you about your teachers and the way they teach. When you look at the items of the questionnaire, can you think of a teacher who you believe is particularly eager to promote these qualities in his or her students? You do not need to mention his or her name.

I think ... yes.

- If NO: Can you maybe think of teachers who you believe attempt to promote at least one of those qualities in their students?
- If YES: What are some ways in which he or she promotes these qualities? Can you think of a concrete example or a situation in which he or she has promoted these qualities?

I guess discussion, well class discussion is something that stood out to me when I saw this because there already in itself is social learning. There in itself is well trying to accept new ideas so I guess that comes to, which one was it?... like ... interpret new information because class discussion also means you need to also partially accept others' ideas so I guess that's probably the most concrete example I can think of.

- What kind of materials does/did he or she use for that? (e.g. handouts, graphic organizers, posted links on the school's learning platform, videos, classroom displays, stories, other resources or ways of teaching)

Resources... I guess... Yeah I can think of, for instance I can think of a teacher who promotes well various ways of learning such as textbooks obviously but also internet sources. He promotes a couple of good internet sources for learning... so I guess that comes down to items. He also had some more handouts so like, this teacher promotes like, various... ways of learning which I guess is crucial.

Differentiation

- In most classrooms, you usually have students who are a bit better than the rest, some who struggle a bit more with the subject than the rest, and then there are some who are something in-between and are neither particularly good or bad in the subject. How well do you think do your teachers deal with such mixed-ability groups? In other words, in what ways do you think do your teachers differentiate among students in their classroom?

I guess one teacher simply does it since it is quite evident within the classroom sometimes so well one of the teacher simply gives us different works or different flexibility sometimes. I guess, actually there isn't too much of differentiation that I see, particularly because it's such a small school I guess so it's quite easy to be

flexible. Again the teachers usually open up their resources and make the students choose if they want to come or not, such as opening in the afternoon, optional afternoon for learning which some students may come or not which all comes to their decisions like if they want to spend time or not. So I guess they don't really force us to learn. It's more like they give us the choice to learn in many cases.

- What kind of materials does/did he or she use for that? (e.g. handouts, graphic organizers, posted links on the school's learning platform, videos, classroom displays, stories, other resources or ways of teaching) [not asked]

ICT

- To what extent do you believe that access to the internet, a computer, and other electronic devices can help you become a more autonomous learner?

To a very large extent I think. Two ways in which it does it are providing various perspectives and providing different ways of learning. So the first one, I guess I see this very much in history and English, or language simply because, for instance from reading, one thing about reading is that... well it does require quite a bit of brain power I guess and you need to concentrate quite a bit so it's quite easy for one to be influenced by reading. That's something that's good and bad at the same time since from reading from the first site if you are influenced by a particular perspective then you can't really fit into the... learner profile of IB whereas internet can provide various perspectives in a more shallow way so that one is able to pick out from it so that's I think something crucial in IB, particularly in the history forms where there are so many perspectives about an event. Also the fact that you are able to access internet resources that you can learn from quite easily. Many of them such as, if you have heard of Cognify that we use in math class. That's one think that I find quite good because, for instance when we were learning about vectors 3D representations can help many students. That's something that we can't really do using books. So I guess internet is quite vital for... IB learner profile since, well it varies in many ways I guess.

- Do you believe that if you had not the possibility to use information and communication technology for school you would be less autonomous in your learning?

I can be I think since that means that... it reduces the amount of for instance creative work such as essays and stuff I guess because if you don't have access to the internet it means you actually have to take the work to read which decreases the amount of... creative learning quite a bit whereas using internet it is quite easy to write for instance internal assessments that we need to be creative about. In this way IB enforces us to... they promote self-directed learning so I guess it's quite crucial.

- To what extent do your teachers use information and communication technology in their classroom to promote learner autonomy (i.e. help you learn more independently)?

Well in IB there's always... This is not really about teachers. This is more about IB textbooks I think. There's always this little box in any subject about something outside of what we're exactly learning, but something that associates with global issues for instance such as what we call nature of science in the group four ... all science. So that may give us the outlook to scientific method, so advantages and disadvantages which is quite interesting to know like how our knowledge is obtained which comes down to TOK. So I guess, and also in each subject there's always a thing about TOK. Sometimes an exploration, sometimes just a little explanation but there's some form of TOK into it. So yeah, I guess they do it quite a bit.

Freedom

- To what extent do you think it is important for teachers to provide choices of different tasks to promote learner autonomy (i.e. help you learn more independently)? Do you think that if a teacher provides a variety of choices it helps students become more autonomous in their learning?

I think yeah, in the sense that, first of all, I believe that being an inquirer is something that's needed for self-directed learning as I have mentioned. The fact that the teacher has provided all different methods means that the student has access to many different methods that aren't just one they favor more perhaps. I personally like to yeah, do more creative work like essays rather than doing handouts so in extreme cases if the teacher gives the choice between essay and worksheet, I don't think they would because the amount of work is completely different, but this does provide different ways of knowing for each individual and each individual has different methods for self-directed learning so I guess it's quite crucial.

- Do your teachers normally give you a variety of tasks to choose from? Or can you think of a teacher who usually provides a range of choices? Again, there is no need to mention the name of that teacher.
 - What kind of tasks and in what situations? [not asked]
 - Why do you think they do that? [not asked]

They don't really give a variety of tasks but they may give different topics. I mean this is also about internal assessments and... that's where you have to pick out your own interests. Even in the criteria for these internal assessments often there is a criteria for your engagement which means that you need to be interested in the topic so you can self explore it self-engaged. So yeah, I guess that answers your question.

Language

As the language of instruction at this school is English, a language that is different from most students' first language, I would like to ask you a few questions about that.

- In how far do you think does being taught in English influence your learning?

- Do you think it would be much different if everything was taught in your native language? Why or why not?

*Difficult question to answer because I wasn't really taught much in *censored*[participant's first language] myself. I guess I am more of a first language English speaker rather than, I mean my mother tongue is *censored*[participant's first language] but, well anyway there are definitely certain cultural influences into language and that's something that I think is quite known out there. There are different words that I can't translate from *censored*[participant's first language] to English and vice versa. So I guess being taught in a certain language already, and if you even take a word that may mean the same, what's associated with that word does differ quite a bit. Even an event if you say the name of an event or even a city. Say if I say *censored*[place in home country] which probably associates with *censored*[place in home country] massacre, there are different perspectives that people hold on this event depending on the culture. In an Anglophone culture it might be more neutral than what we hold as *censored*[participant's nationality] perspectives. So I guess the language that we're taught in does influence quite a bit because there are certain associations associated with certain words that may mean the same. However, given that IB is quite international after all and the curriculum, like, suggests that we need to be quite internationally-minded and quite open to it. I guess there's less influence to it than other curriculums but still quite evident.*

- Do you think it would be much easier for you? Would it have a huge impact on your grades?

For me probably harder because I learned most of my stuff in English but I think that's just personal.

- To what extent do your subject teachers, i.e. any teacher who is not teaching you a language, pay attention to language aspects
 - in the classroom?
 - outside of the classroom / in homework assignments?

*I guess to a large extent in history because history is all about... world history such as world wars 1 and 2 which is still European but I mean there are certain times when we discuss about language used. In other subjects to a lesser extent I think. Since for instance in science, in the area of science even if you take a word, often there isn't that much association to it. Sometimes because its... a jargon to science so we don't use it in daily life, sometimes because the term is just defined and so I guess we can't really go into it. So I guess in the more what we call in *censored*[participant's first language] social studies like linguistic studies and humanities there's more influence of that.*

- Can you think of any resources your teachers use in order to help you or other students with the language barrier?
(e.g. handouts, graphic organizers, posted links on the school's learning platform, videos, classroom displays, stories, other resources or ways of teaching)

I actually don't know because in my classes all of my students are pretty much native speakers or fairly good English speakers so I haven't seen that much. If he

uses certain terms that we don't know he or she just explains it, but I mean not so much because there are only a few terms that come up like that. And sometimes those are the words that even native speakers wouldn't know so I guess it's just like dictionaries and stuff. I purely don't know because there isn't such a student in my class.

Interview 3

Background Information

First, I would like to start asking you a few questions about your school and your background. This is for me to get a better idea of you as an internationally-minded student.

Question	Answer
Grade level / age group <i>What grade are you in? How old are you?</i>	Grade 11, 17 years old
Curriculum at school <i>What curricula or academic programs does your school offer? (Besides the IB).</i>	IB
Language of instruction at school <i>What is the language of instruction at your school? Are there any other languages used (besides in foreign language classes)?</i>	English
Number of students <i>How many students are enrolled in your school?</i>	fewer than 500
Number of faculty members <i>How many faculty members does your school employ?</i>	fewer than 50
Other staff members <i>How many other staff members does your school employ? For example: any kind of teaching support staff, IT, maintenance, security, kitchen staff etc.</i>	librarian, boarding staff, admin staff, IT, music instructors, other instructors for ASAs
Facilities & Equipment <i>What kind of facilities does your school offer? What kind of equipment is available at your school and in the classrooms? (e.g. projector, laptops, tablets etc)</i>	gyms, science labs, kitchen/canteen, boarding facilities, music rooms and music equipment, dance rooms

Other information about the school (certain programs offered, specializations, school environment etc) <i>Is there anything else you can tell me about your school? Does your school offer any additional programs? Are there any specializations? What is your school environment like? What is it that makes your school unique or different from other schools you have been to?</i>	International mentality, small community; communication is better than at previous school
Experience at school <i>How long have you been attending this school?</i>	2nd year now
Subjects <i>What subjects are you taking this year (at SL or HL)?</i>	SL: Italian A, biology, math studies HL: English B, Business management, theater
Favorite subject/class <i>What is your favorite subject or class and why?</i>	business or theater; They are more social based; it's more about communication, critical thinking, creative thinking
Least favorite subject/class <i>What is your least favorite subject or class and why?</i>	math because it's so dry; nothing that would evoke any emotions
Satisfaction with school <i>Are you generally happy with the school you are currently attending? Why or why not?</i>	this is the first and only IB and international school attended so no comparison. Neither happy nor disappointed with the school
Gender <i>male / female / other</i>	male

Learner autonomy

The overall research question of my topic is: "How can learner autonomy be fostered at IB schools?". If you don't know the term "learner autonomy", you might be familiar with similar concepts such as "self-directed learning", "independent learning", or "self-regulation".

*I will ask you a few questions about learner autonomy in relation to your school and the curriculum – **the International Baccalaureate program** – it offers.*

- First of all, have you ever heard of the term "learner autonomy" or any of its related concepts: "self-directed learning", "independent learning", or "self-regulation"?

Yes I did.

- [if YES]: Can you try to explain in your own words what learning autonomously means and what kind of characteristics an autonomous learner should have?
- [if NO → move on to next question]

So basically, autonomy is a kind of structure, a base... like if you have a concept and you divide into many smaller groups or ways, that's for example how I would define it. So basically, it's a learning way... showed in a... how can you learn in different ways, or what are the ways of learning. Something like that.

- I will give you now a short questionnaire that contains characteristics often associated with autonomous learners. This will also give you better idea of what is meant by “learner autonomy”. Please take a moment to read through each of the questions and try to evaluate how good you think you are at these things.
[hand over questionnaire]

I can...	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
determine realistic and reachable goals for school	X			
select appropriate methods and techniques to study and complete work effectively			X	
monitor my own learning			X	
evaluate the progress of my own learning		X		
I...	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
get actively involved in social aspects of learning (e.g. group or pair work, discussions, collaborating/working together)				X
interpret new information in a way that activates my prior knowledge of the subject		X		
am intrinsically motivated		X		
am in control of my own decision-making			X	
take responsibility for the outcomes of my actions	X			
have confidence in myself when it comes to my school work		X		

- Thank you for taking your time. [take questionnaire and look at it so that the participant can also see].
Now I want you to look at your answers and think about your reasoning. Why do you think that this [point at Strongly Agree and Agree items] is something you are good at or you generally do? And why do you think is this [point at Disagree and Strongly Disagree items] something you are not good at or you generally do not do?

(reads) ‘I can determine realistic and reachable goals for school’. The reason why I believe I am strong... with my determination, talking about realistic and

reachable goals for school is because I know what I'm able to achieve. I know what can I do and how far can I go and how strong can I push myself towards either something that I don't like as much as something...else. Yes, I would say, because I know my limits. And then the other one would be (reads) I take responsibility for the outcomes of my actions. So basically, life taught me whatever I do it's no one's fault because no one decides for me. No one decides if I move with my right hand. You don't decide... my choice of words. It's something I realized, that everything I do, say, think, it's my responsibility that I have to take and no one else can do it. And then the last one that I was strongly agreed was (reads) 'get actively involved in social aspects of learning such as group work, discussion, collaborating, working together'. So unfortunately... I don't really get to work in pairs or I don't really get to study in pairs yet. Maybe in the future I will... This is since I came to this school, and yes, I'm looking to do it.

In the classroom you mean or outside?

Both. In the class if we have collaborative work we have to work together but most of the time it's my... mate that is working with me struggles because he or she doesn't want to be with me. So it's hard to communicate and hard to collaborate, it's hard to cooperate and achieve a nice grade.

Learner profiles

- Here is a list of **IB learner profiles** [hand official IB document with page of learner profiles]. Take a look at those learner profiles and the list of characteristics of autonomous learners [point at questionnaire]. Which of these 10 attributes – if any - do you think are representative of promoting learner autonomy?
 - You may choose as many or as few as you want.
 - If you think that all of them or none of them represent learner autonomy, that is also fine.
 - Can you explain why you think this attribute is representative / not representative of learner autonomy?

What about the linkage? Like they are linking together. Like for example, the risk-taker is kind of similar to the responsibility I would say. ... Open-minded to the collaboration, also with communicators. (long pause) balanced I would change with monitor my own learning and evaluate the progress of my own learning. Evaluation I would say would link to reflective.

You said risk-takers you would pair to the responsibility. Why?

Because... usually we mention the word responsibility when... an action occurs right? And this action usually... a new activity. It's something that a human being has done and probably the human being or the person was taking a reason because he or she didn't know what he was doing, but he still knew that he needed to take responsibility.

Can you think of any learner profile attributes here that you feel like have absolutely nothing to do with any of this or not even remotely connected?

Probably caring... because if I understand correctly, the learning autonomy talks mostly about I, about me. It's about one person and that's yourself. Yes it asks you if you collaborate with someone so it asks also for teamwork or social communication. However this is one question out of let's say 8 or 9. And the caring is to show empathy, compassion and respect and to make people's lives better in the world around us. So the caring is more like... is a big call... learning autonomy is for individuals for a short period of time that in the end will go with them for the rest of their lives. The IB learning profile, caring, as I see it, is more including more people in every IB school community that is represented all around the world... So if they are all put together, they all make a difference.

Teachers

- Now I would like to talk to you about your teachers and the way they teach. When you look at the items of the questionnaire, can you think of a teacher who you believe is particularly eager to promote these qualities in his or her students? You do not need to mention his or her name.

So in the past, I was lucky by meeting two teachers, an English teacher for English B and a math teacher and... I can see them almost in each statement that is given in this paper.

- If NO: Can you maybe think of teachers who you believe attempt to promote at least one of those qualities in their students?
- If YES: What are some ways in which he or she promotes these qualities? Can you think of a concrete example or a situation in which he or she has promoted these qualities?

So for example the English teacher, she was teaching English B and English B is mostly 100% foreigners that English is not their first, maybe second but mostly second third and furthermore. And she understood this fact very quickly I think since she started to teach and... even though we for example reached a bad score she was still there telling us like 'guys it's OK, next time you will do better. English is not your first language' and that stuff. Or for example when we were choosing our subjects for DP when we were still in grade 10, she was... telling us her feedback on which we were supposed to base our expectations for next year and how well can we do in the IB program. So for example, I was talking to her a lot, a lot about the realistic and reachable goals for school... for the English and she sounded determined I struggled all of last year but... I decided to go then to England for six weeks and I improved and now I'm doing fine. She was very motivational. She never pulled us down like 'guys you did very bad' or 'not efficient enough'. She was very friendly. She was always prepared for the class. She seemed confident... Before the end of the semester, she sat with the student and we together evaluated the progress this term and in the year and how well and how bad we scored and what could we do better next time. And the same thing with the math teacher.

- What kind of materials does/did he or she use for that? (e.g. handouts, graphic organizers, posted links on the school's learning platform, videos, classroom displays, stories, other resources or ways of teaching)

Yes. What's easier to describe is probably the English class, so let's start with the English class. We were using a projector that was reflecting a presentation or an English article or website from where we were reading and we analyzed the text. For example during the reading, so when we were reading a book, she gave us ... how to call them ... the sheet paper with exercises about the book. So a questionnaire and a small... small summary of the book written in three to four pages and in the end some questions. So they used various media ... they used both paper, exercise sheets, presentation ... yes. (long pause) Yes sometimes we used online websites and this teacher introduced us to Memrise.

Differentiation

- In most classrooms, you usually have students who are a bit better than the rest, some who struggle a bit more with the subject than the rest, and then there are some who are something in-between and are neither particularly good or bad in the subject. How well do you think do your teachers deal with such mixed-ability groups? In other words, in what ways do you think do your teachers differentiate among students in their classroom?

Each teacher is a different person so each teacher has different values and priorities. My business teacher for example... I would say we are divided in two groups in business; the ones that enjoy business and they already knew something about business and the people who did not know anything about business and they are working a lot to learn. This business teacher he sees for example, the half class raising hand all the time when he ask a question but for example instead of just all the time interrogating the same people... and he knows that we for example, that good knows. He instead ask people on purpose, even though they are not raising their hand to answer the question to try. Because he wants to see that they try. He can just force them to participate in the class even though they are not doing that well. In the math class of course, because I am taking studies, the math teacher is very patient no matter how smart or... how not well you are understanding the topic. He comes to you afterwards or during the class and he gives you an exercise and he explains individually to a person what's the matter of the calculation. (long pause) I would say the IB teachers, this is one of the things I really enjoy about IB, the teachers when they see you struggle, mostly they come to you and they try to help you. If not during the class, in the break or after class when you show some... initiative, if you ask yourself.

ICT

- To what extent do you believe that access to the internet, a computer, and other electronic devices can help you become a more autonomous learner?
 - Do you believe that if you had not the possibility to use information and communication technology for school you would be less autonomous in your learning?

I guess if I would not use them I would be more of an autonomist. Why? It's my personal opinion. I don't promote modern technology. I think any kind of sides of

technology really takes away human lifetime, and for example teacher cannot always monitor everyone in the class, especially when the class is about 20 people or 15 people. He cannot go around the class and check what they are doing, if they are doing the work what they should do. It happens a lot, not just with me but with others in the class for example, instead of revising or doing work we open the Youtube and start to watch something and yes. Then also when I come back to my room here in boarding, I open my room to check my ManageBac, and until ManageBac loads I open Youtube for a second and after half an hour I realize 'oh gosh, I wasted just half an hour.' If we didn't use the technology we would be forced to pay all the time attention because he can't repeat, he would not be able to put it down on ManageBac so we would actually write down everything. Also for the homework we would be forced to write them by hand. It takes way longer writing by hand than writing with the computer. I am very old school. (laughs)

- To what extent do your teachers use information and communication technology in their classroom to promote learner autonomy (i.e. help you learn more independently)? [not asked]

Freedom

- To what extent do you think it is important for teachers to provide choices of different tasks to promote learner autonomy (i.e. help you learn more independently)? Do you think that if a teacher provides a variety of choices it helps students become more autonomous in their learning?

Like what?

Let's say you have a teacher who gives you a task and there are multiple options for the task. For example, say your teacher sets you a task and he gives you two handouts and says 'this is handout 1 and this is handout 2. This one is more challenging. This one is a little bit easier. Do the one you prefer to do.' That kind of choice. So would that help you to become more independent in your learning? If you got to choose.

Probably (long pause) yes. In the example you just mentioned, I would compare to university life, to some university lives. As far as I know in some unis you choose your own program your own topics for the degree so you are very free there with choice. I promote this way because you get actually to learn what you want to learn and then do later on in life. Yes on the one hand, if the teacher doesn't give you an option, you are forced to do what they think is better for you, what might not be the best. So it's a balanced opinion... I would say yes. It would give me more freedom and would help me with the learning autonomy. Because then really I am doing what I'm passionate about. So it would help me to do my work on time, to do it properly, do even extra research because I want to enjoy it I want to learn more and more and more. Instead of if I have to analyze William Shakespeare and Romeo and Juliet. Let's say I hate it and I have to analyze the play it would take me a week and if I get to choose Midnight's Summer Dream [sic] it would take me up to maximum 2 days.

Can you think of a teacher who does that? Like is that something that any of your teachers do, or even your previous teachers?

I wouldn't say teachers I would say subject because there are some subjects that don't allow you to choose, for example math you don't choose because it's all the same, business you don't choose because it's all the same. Usually... at least here in high school you get to choose more in the liberal subjects. I would say the arts. So I believe in art you can choose what kind of painting you want to paint. In theater... I choose for myself for example if I want to draw this sketch for the scene or that sketch for the scene or the way how I want to perform the scene if I'm doing an individual performance. It's mostly about myself. For the academic subjects, I wouldn't say you are really able to choose in the high school.

- Do your teachers normally give you a variety of tasks to choose from? Or can you think of a teacher who usually provides a range of choices? Again, there is no need to mention the name of that teacher. [not asked]
 - What kind of tasks and in what situations?
 - Why do you think they do that?

Language

As the language of instruction at this school is English, a language that is different from most students' first language, I would like to ask you a few questions about that.

- In how far do you think does being taught in English influence your learning?
 - Do you think it would be much different if everything was taught in your native language?

That's a weird question. Because (long pause) I got used to English. Even though I don't speak it perfectly, I got used to it. It's also hard to say for me because let's say I have two mother tongues and I don't speak perfectly any of them so English for me is like, my third language that is still in progress of learning and... like let's say an IB in my native language (long pause) probably it would be easier. I wouldn't do it but it could be easier.

- Why or why not? [not asked]
- Do you think it would be much easier for you? Would it have a huge impact on your grades?

It would. In a positive way of course.

- To what extent do your subject teachers, i.e. any teacher who is not teaching you a language, pay attention to language aspects
 - in the classroom?

Sometimes, but very little... because there are already criteria for the specific subject so the teacher has a lot to evaluate, so many small things on the test. So if he were to still add the language and the grammar and how well did he explain it in English, it would probably also be more tougher for him but also for the student more demotivational. Because (long pause) Not really on the test but

when you speak orally. Sometimes when they get annoyed they do it but not really. Very, very little.

They do what now?

When you say a sentence that makes no sense, they correct you. For example, I have classmates that their English is not that good and even though teachers sometimes don't understand, they assume what they want to say and they try to make them feel better by just responding to his question without correcting him because they know how painful it is for the person when they correct him. Well it's sad on the one hand because I think the person should be corrected including myself, then he will be able to improve... He will never improve. He will always keep the same because he keeps repeating the same sentences.

- outside of the classroom / in homework assignments?

Again, depends. For my teachers, I would say 50% wouldn't. The math teacher would, and biology teacher would, and my Italian teacher.

And how would they help you?

For example to meet after school, during the breaks and maybe also during the weekend as well if I ask them to meet for a short period of time.

- Can you think of any resources your teachers use in order to help you or other students with the language barrier? [not asked]
(e.g. handouts, graphic organizers, posted links on the school's learning platform, videos, classroom displays, stories, other resources or ways of teaching)

Interview 4

Background Information

First, I would like to start asking you a few questions about your school and your background. This is for me to get a better idea of you as an internationally-minded student.

Question	Answer
Grade level / age group <i>What grade are you in? How old are you?</i>	Grade 11, 18 years old
Curriculum at school <i>What curricula or academic programs does your school offer? (Besides the IB).</i>	IB
Language of instruction at school <i>What is the language of instruction at your school? Are there any other languages used (besides in foreign language classes)?</i>	English
Number of students <i>How many students are enrolled in your school?</i>	Fewer than 500
Number of faculty members <i>How many faculty members does your school employ?</i>	Fewer than 50
Other staff members <i>How many other staff members does your school employ? For example: any kind of teaching support staff, IT, maintenance, security, kitchen staff etc.</i>	librarian, boarding staff, admin staff, IT, music instructors, other instructors for ASAs
Facilities & Equipment <i>What kind of facilities does your school offer? What kind of equipment is available at your school and in the classrooms? (e.g. projector, laptops, tablets etc)</i>	gyms, science labs, kitchen/canteen, boarding facilities, music rooms and music equipment, dance rooms
Other information about the school (certain programs offered, specializations, school environment etc) <i>Is there anything else you can tell me about your school? Does your school offer any additional programs? Are there any specializations? What is your school environment like? What is it that makes your school unique or different from other schools you have been to?</i>	international school; quite small; everyone knows each other; campus is set up interestingly

Experience at school <i>How long have you been attending this school?</i>	2 nd year
Subjects <i>What subjects are you taking this year (at SL or HL)?</i>	SL: math, German ab initio, physics HL: history, English A, theater
Favorite subject/class <i>What is your favorite subject or class and why?</i>	History; researching history is like reading a story, so it is fun
Least favorite subject/class <i>What is your least favorite subject or class and why?</i>	German or math. Math because of the teacher. German because he finds it difficult
Satisfaction with school <i>Are you generally happy with the school you are currently attending? Why or why not?</i>	Yes, likes the fact that it's small and he likes the teachers
Gender <i>male / female / other</i>	male

Learner autonomy

The overall research question of my topic is: "How can learner autonomy be fostered at IB schools?". If you don't know the term "learner autonomy", you might be familiar with similar concepts such as "self-directed learning", "independent learning", or "self-regulation".

*I will ask you a few questions about learner autonomy in relation to your school and the curriculum – **the International Baccalaureate program** – it offers.*

- First of all, have you ever heard of the term "learner autonomy" or any of its related concepts: "self-directed learning", "independent learning", or "self-regulation"?

Yes, I've heard of 'learning independently'.

- [if YES]: Can you try to explain in your own words what learning autonomously means and what kind of characteristics an autonomous learner should have?
- [if NO → move on to next question]

Self study. Normally if I'm having a hard time with a teacher and they're not teaching very well, I would have to teach myself. That for me would be learning independently. To a lower extent I would say when for example ... I'm a boarding student so I'm here alone and I don't have anyone checking up if I'm doing homework, studies of whatever. I don't have my parents doing that so I have to take that under my own supervision and doing that on myself.

- I will give you now a short questionnaire that contains characteristics often associated with autonomous learners. This will also give you better idea of what is meant by "learner autonomy". Please take a moment to read through each of the questions and try to evaluate how good you think you are at these things.
[hand over questionnaire]

I can...	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
determine realistic and reachable goals for school		X		
select appropriate methods and techniques to study and complete work effectively		X		
monitor my own learning		X		
evaluate the progress of my own learning		X		
I...	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
get actively involved in social aspects of learning (e.g. group or pair work, discussions, collaborating/working together)	X			
interpret new information in a way that activates my prior knowledge of the subject	X			
am intrinsically motivated		X		
am in control of my own decision-making		X		
take responsibility for the outcomes of my actions		X		
have confidence in myself when it comes to my school work		X		

- Thank you for taking your time. [take questionnaire and look at it so that the participant can also see].
Now I want you to look at your answers and think about your reasoning. Why do you think that this [point at Strongly Agree and Agree items] is something you are good at or you generally do? And why do you think is this [point at Disagree and Strongly Disagree items] something you are not good at or you generally do not do?

Well this one [points at actively involved] I would say that because I am a social person ... and one way I learn well is by discussing and talking about it. So if it's a group, it's a debate or a discussion, that way I can learn faster. When I talk about it I remember it much better. Yeah this one's the same [points at 'take responsibility for the outcomes of my actions']

Is there anything else you feel you need to explain? For the rest of them you all put agree.

'Have confidence in myself when it comes to my schoolwork'. I kind of brought it close to disagree because it's nor here or there [points at line between 'agree' and 'disagree']. For some works yes, for some no. For example I would say for history, math, for some subjects yes but for example, for German I would say

maybe no because it's completely abstract for me and it's like basically me being in a swimming pool and not knowing how to learn and having to learn as I'm drowning.

For any of the items on the list, can you think of a concrete situation or an example where you acted in that way?

Yeah, so for this one (reads) 'getting actively involved in social aspects of learning'. ... With a friend of mine ... I taught her math. She was struggling and I worked with her. They also say the best way of learning is to teach someone else. That really worked. When I was teaching her, me myself got much better. And when in history we had a class debate whether something yes or no. Half saying yes, half saying no. For that debate both sides I learned so if there's an essay now I can argue both sides.

Learner profiles

- Here is a list of **IB learner profiles** [hand official IB document with page of learner profiles]. Take a look at those learner profiles and the list of characteristics of autonomous learners [point at questionnaire]. Which of these 10 attributes – if any - do you think are representative of promoting learner autonomy?
 - You may choose as many or as few as you want.
 - If you think that all of them or none of them represent learner autonomy, that is also fine.
 - Can you explain why you think this attribute is representative / not representative of learner autonomy?

Maybe with interpret new information in a way that activates my prior knowledge – knowledgeable. Thinkers as well. Communicators it would be social. Principled, no idea. Open-minded maybe most of them. Get actively involved, or new information, motivated, stay in control, take responsibility. Yea I think that's most of them. Caring, I don't think any of them. Risk-takers I don't think any of them. Balanced, again none of these. Reflective, monitoring learning, evaluating your own process, maybe those.

So you think the most important one if I understood correctly was open-minded?
Yes

How do you think is an open-minded IB learner relate to being an independent learner?

Well, overall especially for IB I always think open-minded is one of the most important things and... if you're being an independent learner it means basically you're thinking inside the box. That could limit you in a lot of ways so you always have to try and keep an open mind. Especially to other cultures, especially if you're in IB it means you're in an international school or something. Open-minded is extremely important due to the cultures and ethnicities that are all around you. So I would say one of the important ones is actually open-minded.

Then you said for instance caring, risk takers, balanced and principled they do not relate at all to being an independent learner.

Well I mean not to these because... balanced means that IB isn't just about studying. It has sports and other activities or other stuff around it as well, different branches and I don't see a note here. It is important to IB but here I don't see any of it. Risk-takers, same goes with that. Caring, also I don't know how is that important to independent learning. Principled ... it is important to independent learning. I didn't see it here but it is important because you've got to know your facts and everything. You've got to take control. I got to basically understand what you're doing.

Teachers

- Now I would like to talk to you about your teachers and the way they teach. When you look at the items of the questionnaire, can you think of a teacher who you believe is particularly eager to promote these qualities in his or her students? You do not need to mention his or her name.

Hm, (long pause) I don't know. (long pause) hmm...

- If NO: Can you maybe think of teachers who you believe attempt to promote at least one of those qualities in their students?
- If YES: What are some ways in which he or she promotes these qualities? Can you think of a concrete example or a situation in which he or she has promoted these qualities? [not asked]
 - What kind of materials does/did he or she use for that? (e.g. handouts, graphic organizers, posted links on the school's learning platform, videos, classroom displays, stories, other resources or ways of teaching)

Maybe some of my teachers but overall I would say maybe no because some of them are quite weak in some stages.

What do you think would be the weakest aspects here?

Some of them struggle with keeping the students motivated... Some of them might have problems with responsibility of outcomes even though that's ours but a lot of them just say they're doing their job and they're not willing to expand that more than that limit. That is quite bad I think, so of outcomes or like, keeping the students motivated or helping and keeping track of all their students and helping them as much as they can. Some of them actually limit themselves in that I believe.

Differentiation

- In most classrooms, you usually have students who are a bit better than the rest, some who struggle a bit more with the subject than the rest, and then there are some who are something in-between and are neither particularly good or bad in the subject. How well do you think do your teachers deal with such mixed-ability groups? In other words, in what ways do you think do your teachers differentiate among students in their classroom?

Well I have like two types of teachers. Some do it very well. Some can clearly see who tries and who doesn't and that's why even though if someone who isn't trying and doesn't care might get less help than the one that actually does care which is good. However some teachers have their favorites as have the ones they don't like and that might kind of change or tamper the way they think or grade which is bad.

So you think it's kind of subjective and affects grading especially?

No not grading, but in the long term it does affect grading because if they are giving a student more attention, well most probably that student would do better. If the relationship of a student with a teacher is good, most likely the student would get better grades because they would kind of feel obligated towards that teacher and if the teacher doesn't have a strong relationship, the student is just like I don't give a care.

So when the teacher does put more attention on a student how do they do that? Have you observed that?

Yes, just from communication out of classroom, communication in classroom, tone of speaking. Sometimes it would be that they would put the differences over the fact that, off the top of my head, like this doesn't happen anymore because like it's grade 11 but like in simple terms for you to understand this. Two students don't hand in homework on different days. The one that is liked more might not get a punishment or might get a punishment to a lower extent than the other one that isn't liked as much.

- What kind of materials does/did he or she use for that? (e.g. handouts, graphic organizers, posted links on the school's learning platform, videos, classroom displays, stories, other resources or ways of teaching)

For example, in history whenever I had a question I went to my teachers I got resources, different resources and answers on what should I do and what's better for me to do so in that case, yes I have gotten a lot of books or other things that I need to focus on more and there are some that when I ask for it yes they would give me exam style questions or something and I would go with that. But there are some that are quite abstract and you really don't have a clear visual idea what I have to do.

ICT

- To what extent do you believe that access to the internet, a computer, and other electronic devices can help you become a more autonomous learner?
 - Do you believe that if you had not the possibility to use information and communication technology for school you would be less autonomous in your learning?

Not really, no. I would say it would be the same because before I came here I didn't use any technology for school. However, it makes me more independent ... because ... actually yes, technology makes me more independent because if I

have many questions, I could just research it myself and I would get the answer 'oh what could I do' and as a last resort I could use asking someone else. However asking someone else might actually be more helpful even though it's the easier way to look it up yourself. When you don't have technology, you would have no other option other than asking someone else. So it does quite ... make you more independent. At some points it's good and at some points it won't be as detailed so it's not as good.

- To what extent do your teachers use information and communication technology in their classroom to promote learner autonomy (i.e. help you learn more independently)?

To promote independent learning? I don't know about that but I know that they use technology quite a lot. I mean, the ones that they can they do. For example, I know that math higher level, I'm not in it but they use Cognify or Khan Academy. We currently aren't using that but that is quite helpful I hear. Some teachers give out websites that have test examples or some give out applications that help with doing experiments. However I don't see how they would promote it into independent learning. Maybe by uploading files that you would have access to but it's up to you if you use them or not. So maybe that if you could upload and download them and then use it yourself and it's just not a homework and not an actual task. It's up to you. Maybe that I would say.

Do teachers do that?

Yeah some of them. When you ask for them they say that it's on files. If you want you could use them but there's no homework or assessment attached to them so it's into your own hands if you actually go and read it or do more than you're asked.

Freedom

- To what extent do you think it is important for teachers to provide choices of different tasks to promote learner autonomy (i.e. help you learn more independently)? Do you think that if a teacher provides a variety of choices it helps students become more autonomous in their learning?
 - Do your teachers normally give you a variety of tasks to choose from? Or can you think of a teacher who usually provides a range of choices? Again, there is no need to mention the name of that teacher. [not asked]
 - What kind of tasks and in what situations?
 - Why do you think they do that?

I'm sorry what do you mean?

Do you think that if a teacher provides a variety of choices it helps students become more autonomous in their learning?
(long pause)

So let's say your teacher for instance brings in two tasks and one of them is more difficult and the other one is easier. And now you get to choose the one you want to do. Does that help you become more independent in your learning?

Yeah, this does help with it, I mean it doesn't help...It's independent learning so it's up to the person who's learning. So it helps because one could choose which one they go for one could see if they have problems in the challenging one. They question those. If it's too strong for them, the weaker one and then they ask the teacher for help with the challenging one. One could do both, see where they have problems, their strengths and weaknesses and in that sense yeah. Some teachers, by giving the variety of tasks. For example in history, we normally have a lot of essay questions that we pick one out of the four. We always have a chance to redo it. Our teacher gives us a chance to redo which I think is really good because if you get a five in one, you could redo that one and try and get a better grade. You could also try and get another question so you would be practicing more variety of questions.

Language

As the language of instruction at this school is English, a language that is different from most students' first language, I would like to ask you a few questions about that.

- In how far do you think does being taught in English influence your learning?
 - Do you think it would be much different if everything was taught in your native language? Why or why not?

For me, right now I would say no. Maybe to a really low extent but I would say mainly no because I am quite OK with English. I'm an English A higher level obviously. For me no. I mean at the start of my last year of IB in grade 10 here, I was struggling in math or science because I didn't know any of the scientific or mathematical terms in English and I was struggling especially in tests because when I read the question I knew how to solve it, I just didn't understand it because I didn't know what they were asking from me. So in that case I struggled but then now I'm fine because I learned it. So I would guess a lot of people would have that problem who are not native speaker or are not good in the language English. Especially at tests because at that time you can't ask and have to figure it out yourself. So if you have a question that you might even know how to solve but you don't understand what they're asking. At that point it would affect you quite a lot. Especially the grade.

- Do you think it would be much easier for you? Would it have a huge impact on your grades? [not asked]
- To what extent do your subject teachers, i.e. any teacher who is not teaching you a language, pay attention to language aspects
 - in the classroom?

I would say quite a lot. I would see that when the teacher speaks to a student who they know isn't strong in English as much, they would kind of try and speak slower and more simple. Using simple terms and staying away from the harder ones. Also, whenever a student asks for a meaning of a word they always try to

explain it as much as they can until the student understands it, so quite well.

- outside of the classroom / in homework assignments?

This one I don't know because nothing like that ever happened for me. I mean, that I actually did see was for theater. We were doing a Shakespeare book and we had a student who was struggling with English quite a lot and so obviously they're going to struggle a lot with Shakespeare so the teacher got him a book which is for primary students or like for early years. So it would help him understand way better and it did help quite a lot. So that I guess, if they see the students aren't English A they would try and help out as much as they can I guess.

- Can you think of any resources your teachers use in order to help you or other students with the language barrier?
(e.g. handouts, graphic organizers, posted links on the school's learning platform, videos, classroom displays, stories, other resources or ways of teaching)

I can't think of anything really because it doesn't happen for me. I don't know if they do or do not do that. I don't know.

Interview 5

Background Information

First, I would like to start asking you a few questions about your school and your background. This is for me to get a better idea of you as an internationally-minded student.

Question	Answer
Grade level / age group <i>What grade are you in? How old are you?</i>	Grade 12, 18 years old
Curriculum at school <i>What curricula or academic programs does your school offer? (Besides the IB).</i>	IB, option to not do the IB and receive American-style high school diploma (NOT American curriculum though!)
Language of instruction at school <i>What is the language of instruction at your school? Are there any other languages used (besides in foreign language classes)?</i>	English
Number of students <i>How many students are enrolled in your school?</i>	Approximately 1,500
Number of faculty members <i>How many faculty members does your school employ?</i>	Approximately 300
Other staff members <i>How many other staff members does your school employ? For example: any kind of teaching support staff, IT, maintenance, security, kitchen staff etc.</i>	cafeteria, English B learning program, learning support division, maintenance, sports division, IT department (about 20 staff),
Facilities & Equipment <i>What kind of facilities does your school offer? What kind of equipment is available at your school and in the classrooms? (e.g. projector, laptops, tablets etc)</i>	pool, playground, full sited pitch, gym, basketball courts, volleyball courts, recording studios, meeting halls, theaters, multi-purpose rooms
Other information about the school (certain programs offered, specializations, school environment etc) <i>Is there anything else you can tell me about your school? Does your school offer any additional programs? Are there any specializations? What is your school environment like? What is it that makes your school unique or different from other schools you have been to?</i>	Great intercurricular activities, lots of international sporting competitions, international MUN competition, strong and reliable reputation, short on support and highly competitive; option to not do the IB at all and get a regular high school diploma from the school

Experience at school <i>How long have you been attending this school?</i>	3 rd year now; since grade 10
Subjects <i>What subjects are you taking this year (at SL or HL)?</i>	SL: English language and literature, german, mathematics HL: geography, history, design
Favorite subject/class <i>What is your favorite subject or class and why?</i>	history or geography; very enthusiastic about the courses in general
Least favorite subject/class <i>What is your least favorite subject or class and why?</i>	Mathematics; “not a fan of the way it’s taught” or the teacher, and also does not like the subject itself
Satisfaction with school <i>Are you generally happy with the school you are currently attending? Why or why not?</i>	very happy; the social environment is very egalitarian and friendly; teachers are approachable.
Gender <i>male / female / other</i>	male
Additional information	Has been at various IB schools and went through all three IB programmes (PYP, MYP, DP)

Learner autonomy

The overall research question of my topic is: “How can learner autonomy be fostered at IB schools?”. If you don’t know the term “learner autonomy”, you might be familiar with similar concepts such as “self-directed learning”, “independent learning”, or “self-regulation”.

*I will ask you a few questions about learner autonomy in relation to your school and the curriculum – **the International Baccalaureate program** – it offers.*

- First of all, have you ever heard of the term “learner autonomy” or any of its related concepts: “self-directed learning”, “independent learning”, or “self-regulation”?
 - [if YES]: Can you try to explain in your own words what learning autonomously means and what kind of characteristics an autonomous learner should have?
 - [if NO → move on to next question]

Yes. I believe it’s when an institution gives its students the opportunity to self study, to decide what the student or pupil would like to learn themselves and the methods through which the student can achieve this.

- I will give you now a short questionnaire that contains characteristics often associated with autonomous learners. This will also give you better idea of what is meant by “learner autonomy”. Please take a moment to read through each of the questions and try to evaluate how good you think you are at these things.
[hand over questionnaire]

I can...	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
determine realistic and reachable goals for school	X			
select appropriate methods and techniques to study and complete work effectively	X			
monitor my own learning			X	
evaluate the progress of my own learning		X		
I...	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
get actively involved in social aspects of learning (e.g. group or pair work, discussions, collaborating/working together)		X		
interpret new information in a way that activates my prior knowledge of the subject	X			
am intrinsically motivated	X			
am in control of my own decision-making	X			
take responsibility for the outcomes of my actions	X			
have confidence in myself when it comes to my school work	X			

- Thank you for taking your time. [take questionnaire and look at it so that the participant can also see].

Now I want you to look at your answers and think about your reasoning. Why do you think that this [point at Strongly Agree and Agree items] is something you are good at or you generally do? And why do you think is this [point at Disagree and Strongly Disagree items] something you are not good at or you generally do not do?

*I have always been surrounded in every IB school I've been to by an inspirational environment, one in which I could choose what I wanted to learn. Even if it wasn't specifically course related, I could always still apply the knowledge. For example I could be sitting in a history class reading about something that the teacher said 'Hey by the way, you might want to read about this' and I would go home and I would be like 'hey that was pretty cool' and then I'd do my own research and then I could come back and reapply it in the class. That kind of stuff is what I absolutely love about my courses here. I disagreed here on monitor my own learning because *censored*[name of school] doesn't particularly have a program in which I can do like my own assignments and then submit it to the teacher for regarding and then get their opinions on it. While I can evaluate my progress, my knowledge and how much I believe I know about a subject, I can't actually get professional feedback from someone just yet. But I mean then again it's also*

school. It's not their job to correct stuff I do in my free time. But from what I can see, what the inspiration has given me in my course is that when I come back with something I've brought back from the outside, is that more often than not, I get positive feedback on it. I feel like everything else I've ticked strongly agree or agree, quite simply because I enjoy learning. The IB is perfect for that. It gives you the opportunities to study whatever you want. It's often compared to the IGCSE... saying the IGCSE gives you a broad worldview while the IB gives you a more in depth worldview but not as broad. I strongly disagree with that. I feel that the IB is overall a great system. It'll prepare you for virtually every direction you'll go to. And because of the environment that exists in most IB courses, you have to teach yourself a little bit. You can't just regurgitate what the teacher has been teaching you. You have to think critically at some point. And I feel like that's what's strongly emphasized within the diploma itself. That it's strongly research based, student-led and that's the skills that they want you to adopt over time.

Learner profiles

- Here is a list of **IB learner profiles** [hand official IB document with page of learner profiles]. Take a look at those learner profiles and the list of characteristics of autonomous learners [point at questionnaire]. Which of these 10 attributes – if any - do you think are representative of promoting learner autonomy?
 - You may choose as many or as few as you want.
 - If you think that all of them or none of them represent learner autonomy, that is also fine.
 - Can you explain why you think this attribute is representative / not representative of learner autonomy?

Inquirers is pretty self-explanatory. Knowledgeable ... I say that because unless you have a previous knowledge basin on something, your door to a field hasn't been opened yet, making learner autonomy a lot more difficult so I feel like the school's responsibility is to provide base knowledge and trigger the inquirer part of a person so that they'll want to go and find more. Thinkers is also pretty self-explanatory. Information comes in. You analyze it. You link it with previous information that you saw. Together with inquirers and thinkers you build knowledge. Open-minded. You have to be open-minded because otherwise you're going to end up with a one-sided world view. When you have a one-sided world view, it's very hard to expand your horizons. Reflective because a little bit of introspection is needed. You've got to know where you were before, where you want to be. Reflective is while you're looking back it is also the most important aspect when it comes to setting goals in the future.

What about the rest of them, caring, risk takers, balanced, principled and communicators? Why do you think are those not as vital?

I would argue that while independent learners to need to communicate with others to share their ideas and get feedback back from others so that they can further broaden their horizons; oftentimes skills are self-taught. For example I've gone in and taught myself to computer code, I've taught myself a language to the point of fluency. One doesn't always need to be out there with other people to learn. While of course it's a very strong aspect, without the previous five that I had already like pointed out, it's not that important. I avoided principled because I feel like that's more related to academic honesty and discipline. Caring ... well (laughs) some of my friends have described me as a sociopath (laughs) with

different moral standards from most people, although I feel like a might put a thing around caring because if you don't care about something you won't be intrigued into learning about it. Risk taking ... not all learning is a risk. In fact, learning is the opposite of a risk. You're learning to fight a risk. Balanced I feel like is already accounted for by using thinkers and reflective.

You said that inquirers is the most of obvious one. Why did you say so?

The most self explanatory. Because here it says we nurture curiosity, developing skills for inquiry. This nurture curiosity aspect is the most fundamental aspect of being an independent learner. If you haven't been taught how to be curious or if you don't have the inspiration to be curious, you are not going to be learning by yourself. You are just going to keep regurgitating what people have already told you.

Teachers

- Now I would like to talk to you about your teachers and the way they teach. When you look at the items of the questionnaire, can you think of a teacher who you believe is particularly eager to promote these qualities in his or her students? You do not need to mention his or her name.

Yea ... I can think of a few. Yea.

- If NO: Can you maybe think of teachers who you believe attempt to promote at least one of those qualities in their students?
- If YES: What are some ways in which he or she promotes these qualities? Can you think of a concrete example or a situation in which he or she has promoted these qualities?
 - What kind of materials does/did he or she use for that? (e.g. handouts, graphic organizers, posted links on the school's learning platform, videos, classroom displays, stories, other resources or ways of teaching)

Well, I would have to reference my history course for that one. The teacher six years ago abandoned the traditional style of 'here is course material, here is the book, open it and learn' which while it was technically independent learning and you could confer with him, it wasn't actually full developing thoughts. It was more about reading something and trying to draw an analysis out of it. Today the way we learn history is we are given course material the class before, you are expected to read it at home and research it and then when we come back we sit in a circle and the students would hold debates with each other. You would try to debate in class what happened, why it happened, referring to works that you have seen before. Through that the teacher completely withdraws himself from the class, does not have to participate in the discussion, only gives material at times and the students essentially teach the course. And because they are actively involved in competing against and with each other, that is when the maximum amount of opinion sharing happens. And when you are listening to your friend giving you some information, it's a lot different from reading something in a book. And that way you also get a lot more interested in the course because it's something personal, something shared ... Other teachers have now adopted

*this approach as well at *censored*[name of school]. I mean, the majority of courses are still taught the traditional IB way. The Harkness method, as it's known by, is now being adopted in the majority of humanities based subjects.*

Differentiation

- In most classrooms, you usually have students who are a bit better than the rest, some who struggle a bit more with the subject than the rest, and then there are some who are something in-between and are neither particularly good or bad in the subject. How well do you think do your teachers deal with such mixed-ability groups? In other words, in what ways do you think do your teachers differentiate among students in their classroom?

I'd say the teachers do a pretty damn good job of keeping everything in line. For example, in my German class I am one of two students and I am by far the weaker student. And despite this, the teacher is still able to keep an atmosphere of positive learning around. You are still intrigued to learn and through that you develop yourself over time. There are other classes in which I am far ahead of everyone else and there the teachers also look at who needs more support and who doesn't and they structure the way they teach their class around bringing everyone up. Instead of accounting just for who is weak and making it easier, they will find a way to improve the people who are weak without having to change too much of the course. And that can be done through methods of changing teaching style, by changing the method through which independent learning is done or by simply suggesting different styles of learning to people.

Can you be a bit more specific? Like, what kind of situations or examples can you think of? What do teachers do?

Okay, I am going to use my history class again here as an example. When we first started the Harkness thing, what happened is that some people who are very vocal, like myself, were able to voice their opinions a lot more often than people who are a bit more reserved. And because of that the people who are reserved were never able to share their opinions and participate properly in discussions and debates. Thanks to that, their grades dropped. Despite people being out there, they just couldn't pick up what was happening. There is a very big difference between listening in and actually participating. Some people then voiced their concern to the teacher and said, 'Hey, sorry I am just not getting what I want out of this course'. And what he then did was he went ahead and changed the way Harknesses are done and made the groups smaller. So if the group is smaller chances are likely you have a lot less vocal people in your group and you have a better chance to speak yourself. Also now we do Harknesses half the time and the other half it's you sit yourself down with the computer, you are given course materials, you can read, you can watch videos if you want. As long as you are actively participating and you do regular check ins with the teacher and ask questions, he is able to establish an atmosphere in which everyone is able to learn and everyone is able to excel to the best of their potential.

- What kind of materials does/did he or she use for that? (e.g. handouts, graphic organizers, posted links on the school's learning platform, videos, classroom displays, stories, other resources or ways of teaching) [not asked]

ICT

- To what extent do you believe that access to the internet, a computer, and other electronic devices can help you become a more autonomous learner?
 - Do you believe that if you had not the possibility to use information and communication technology for school you would be less autonomous in your learning?

I hate reading books. (laughs) It is as simple as that. I would be nowhere without my IT. (laughs) So yes, everything is done on computer. Everything except the actual exam writing. (long pause) I mean while we might be distracted occasionally by going on Facebook, I'd say we definitely get more out of it than we lose.

When you say you get more out of it than you lose, what exactly is it that gets you more out of it?

The information revolution. You can absorb so much information so much more quickly than you can when reading a book. While people are still arguing that when you read a book it's a lot easier to pick up on a story because it's a much slower pace, you absorb things as quickly as you read them, on the internet you can always just go over and go over as much as you want, requiring minimal effort. So while it may not be the most efficient way of learning, you definitely get more information, more stuff you can use in the classroom, more access to stuff outside of which the course is actually offering you.

What exactly is it that ICT or the internet makes you more independent in your learning?

*It gives me access to things which the teacher wouldn't give me access to. So if there is a theory I want to research up more I can do that. I mean ... it really is research for whatever you want. That's in part the environment at *censored*[school name] but also in part due to ICT.*

- To what extent do your teachers use information and communication technology in their classroom to promote learner autonomy (i.e. help you learn more independently)? [not asked]

Freedom

- To what extent do you think it is important for teachers to provide choices of different tasks to promote learner autonomy (i.e. help you learn more independently)? Do you think that if a teacher provides a variety of choices it helps students become more autonomous in their learning?

What kind of tasks are you talking about?

For instance, if we stick to the differentiation question, sometimes what teachers do is they will give you two different tasks. They will say this is task one, that's the more challenging task and this is task two, this one is a bit easier. You choose the one that is more appropriate for you. So, this would be one example.

In some courses they do that, some courses don't. I think that's the teacher's personal style. Hmm (long pause) I'd say you could argue in both ways. On the one hand, it's nice to have everyone doing the same task because it brings everyone up to the same standard, but on the other hand it's also nice to have people who are already excelling at a course do the harder stuff. But that leaves the people who aren't excelling just do the regular. So, I mean I guess you kind of need a mix. And with regards to independent learning, I mean, if it's independent learning, you are kind of making your own tasks (laughs). So I guess that doesn't really count.

- Do your teachers normally give you a variety of tasks to choose from? Or can you think of a teacher who usually provides a range of choices? Again, there is no need to mention the name of that teacher.
 - What kind of tasks and in what situations?
 - Why do you think they do that?

I would say normally we don't get a variety of tasks. But the type of task we change, but everyone does the same work ... generally. There are subjects in which that isn't the case. For instance, in design you might be given an analysis task and it's like, 'All right here analyze this project'. And you could either do a regular question or a regular exam practice paper or an extra difficult one ... it's really up to you what you want to do. Whereas in other subjects, I mean, I'll be honest, in a lot of subjects we don't even get extra tasks outside of the direct course work.

Language

As the language of instruction at this school is English, a language that is different from most students' first language, I would like to ask you a few questions about that.

- In how far do you think does being taught in English influence your learning?
 - Do you think it would be much different if everything was taught in your native language? Why or why not?

That's a good question. (long pause). That is a very good question.

- Do you think it would be much easier for you? Would it have a huge impact on your grades?

*I mean I personally speak three fluent languages so it wouldn't make a difference for me. But I do see the people that learn in English but aren't native English speakers. They do struggle sometimes academically. For example I could reference some *censored*[nationals of host country] who still don't speak English to one hundred percent of their ability. They do a lot better in their mother tongue course than they do in any of their other courses because they are taught in English and sometimes the language barrier is just too big. ... Then again, the majority of the world's information is findable and searchable in English. So in the context of independent learning, English has to be the most useful language out of them all.*

- To what extent do your subject teachers, i.e. any teacher who is not teaching you a language, pay attention to language aspects
 - in the classroom?
 - outside of the classroom / in homework assignments?

Barely. It's taught in English and that's how it will be.

So if you hand in homework or your IA or whatever it is, do they not mark any-
They do not mark any foreign language at all ... unless it's a foreign language course obviously.

[interviewer starts asking next question and is interrupted by participant]

Actually, one second. I want to quickly go back to the point you were on before. I said that teachers never mark in other languages. I would have to reference one time where I had to hand in an assessment for German in English because my German ... it was just so horrendous consistently that my teacher was just like, 'Okay, what if it really is just a language problem. What if you are just missing the vocabulary. What if you just can't analyze in German'. Because I was constantly making cases like 'I am better than this, I can do this'. And she said, 'All right, try doing it in English then'. And I did and she graded it in her own time, it wasn't required, and it turned out much better than I expected it to. So teachers do at times ... if you are really desperate grade your stuff in a different language, but I don't think this would happen in any other course if I am honest. I don't think any other teacher cares enough. It's not required of them.

- Can you think of any resources your teachers use in order to help you or other students with the language barrier?
 (e.g. handouts, graphic organizers, posted links on the school's learning platform, videos, classroom displays, stories, other resources or ways of teaching)

Well, when teachers aren't required to do it, they don't do it. But, my Korean friend barely speaks English at all. He gets the coursework and he goes to learning support where he has a Korean speaker who also speaks English to understand what the task is. Alongside with regular intensive English training, his grades are slowly improving in every subject.

Interview 6

Background Information

First, I would like to start asking you a few questions about your school and your background. This is for me to get a better idea of you as an internationally-minded student.

Question	Answer
Grade level / age group <i>What grade are you in? How old are you?</i>	Grade 11, 17 years old
Curriculum at school <i>What curricula or academic programs does your school offer? (Besides the IB).</i>	IB
Language of instruction at school <i>What is the language of instruction at your school? Are there any other languages used (besides in foreign language classes)?</i>	English
Number of students <i>How many students are enrolled in your school?</i>	Approximately 1,500
Number of faculty members <i>How many faculty members does your school employ?</i>	Approximately 300
Other staff members <i>How many other staff members does your school employ? For example: any kind of teaching support staff, IT, maintenance, security, kitchen staff etc.</i>	4-5 counselors for every year level, learning support staff, staff of the organization "JUMP", leadership team and coordinators
Facilities & Equipment <i>What kind of facilities does your school offer? What kind of equipment is available at your school and in the classrooms? (e.g. projector, laptops, tablets etc)</i>	Design lab (3D printers and various other equipment), music lab, recording studios, multiple practice rooms, many instruments; every student receives a MacBook Air
Other information about the school (certain programs offered, specializations, school environment etc) <i>Is there anything else you can tell me about your school? Does your school offer any additional programs? Are there any specializations? What is your school environment like? What is it that makes your school unique or different from other schools you have been to?</i>	Service learning; the school has about service groups with 20-30 students each; e.g. a coffee company run by students who sell fair-trade coffee; 2 banks that are student-led; "it's CAS on steroids";

Experience at school <i>How long have you been attending this school?</i>	1.5 years
Subjects <i>What subjects are you taking this year (at SL or HL)?</i>	HL: history, economics, physics, SL: English A Literature, German A Literature, math
Favorite subject/class <i>What is your favorite subject or class and why?</i>	Economics and history; student feels that both subjects are everywhere and explain how the world works; very self-taught and open; lots of discovery learning and choices
Least favorite subject/class <i>What is your least favorite subject or class and why?</i>	English; "course is taught in such a pedantic way"; lots of homework; not a lot of choices; very high standard for a SL class
Satisfaction with school <i>Are you generally happy with the school you are currently attending? Why or why not?</i>	Yes, especially because of service-learning aspect
Gender <i>male / female / other</i>	male

Learner autonomy

The overall research question of my topic is: "How can learner autonomy be fostered at IB schools?". If you don't know the term "learner autonomy", you might be familiar with similar concepts such as "self-directed learning", "independent learning", or "self-regulation".

*I will ask you a few questions about learner autonomy in relation to your school and the curriculum – **the International Baccalaureate program** – it offers.*

- First of all, have you ever heard of the term "learner autonomy" or any of its related concepts: "self-directed learning", "independent learning", or "self-regulation"?

Yes, I have heard of it. It's kind of a big concept at the school. I mean, I know what it means, I know the words. At my old school it definitely wasn't autonomy, the teacher taught the course. Here, it's a lot more popular. So, for instance, my history teacher is very much into the Harkness method and he just throws resources at us. He rarely ever teaches us. So.. I know the concept very well.

- [if YES]: Can you try to explain in your own words what learning autonomously means and what kind of characteristics an autonomous learner should have?
- [if NO → move on to next question]

I think learner autonomy is the ability to ... learn both at your own pace ... and with your own order. So, that is something ... I feel like you should be allowed to spend more time on some things and less time on other things. While, you know, if you following you teacher's curriculum, you have a set time for everything.

That's what I like about learner autonomy. On the other hand, I feel like, the most important part for me is you get to do things your own way. So, history class, the way my teacher teaches it is very topic oriented. We are doing Chinese history right now and we focus on various topics around that. So and to me it doesn't make sense like that. It is not a way I can learn history because I need it in a chronological order. So learner autonomy helps me with that because I get to google things myself, read the Powerpoints the teacher makes, but put them into the correct order in my mind to make sense of it.

- I will give you now a short questionnaire that contains characteristics often associated with autonomous learners. This will also give you better idea of what is meant by "learner autonomy". Please take a moment to read through each of the questions and try to evaluate how good you think you are at these things.
[hand over questionnaire]

I can...	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
determine realistic and reachable goals for school	X			
select appropriate methods and techniques to study and complete work effectively		X		
monitor my own learning	X			
evaluate the progress of my own learning		X		
I...	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
get actively involved in social aspects of learning (e.g. group or pair work, discussions, collaborating/working together)	X			
interpret new information in a way that activates my prior knowledge of the subject	X			
am intrinsically motivated		X		
am in control of my own decision-making		X		
take responsibility for the outcomes of my actions	X			
have confidence in myself when it comes to my school work	X			

- Thank you for taking your time. [take questionnaire and look at it so that the participant can also see].
Now I want you to look at your answers and think about your reasoning. Why do you think that this [point at Strongly Agree and Agree items] is something you are good at or you generally do? And why do you think is this [point at Disagree and Strongly Disagree items] something you are not good at or you generally do not do?

- [eliciting more specific information] Can you come up with an example or situation for that?
- [Discuss questionnaire with participant, make sure participant can see questionnaire the entire time and refer to it]

Well, I think ... I've been doing a lot of self-learning for the past year. So, I've really learned to know myself now. So, I know when I can't do something. And I know where to get help. So, I know where I want to be and what I can't reach, but I know that the techniques I am using are not the best. So, I am less good at knowing my techniques, but I am better at knowing where to go to improve my techniques. And I know I love learning and going to school and all that, but on the motivational component and on the decision-making, there is a certain point where I still have to stick to the schedule and where I still have to prioritize. So I often find myself going, 'You know, I have my plan, but because there is a history assessment this week I am going to sidestep my plan and do what the teacher is telling me for three days and just focus on these'. So, I can still make my own decisions, but there are also instances where I need to sidestep my plans and just sort of follow instincts.

Learner profiles

- Here is a list of **IB learner profiles** [hand official IB document with page of learner profiles]. Take a look at those learner profiles and the list of characteristics of autonomous learners [point at questionnaire]. Which of these 10 attributes – if any - do you think are representative of promoting learner autonomy?
 - You may choose as many or as few as you want.
 - If you think that all of them or none of them represent learner autonomy, that is also fine.
 - Can you explain why you think this attribute is representative / not representative of learner autonomy?

I think it's inquirer, for sure. And open-minded, for sure. And then reflective, definitely. Uhm (long pause). I feel like balanced, and then, personally, I feel like principled is an important one. But then I feel like that is especially important for me because I am someone who will choose the thing that interests me more in exchange for getting a lower grade because I know I am not as good at that as I am at something that we have practiced. So, I think that is important for autonomous learning because I get to sacrifice my grade for a lower interest or vice-versa. So, you need to have that idea of being principled and I need to decide what I want in my life and what I don't. Yea. That's it.

Can you maybe elaborate on inquirers, open-minded, and reflective a bit?

Well, the way I went through it is I went inquirer for sure because one of the most important things is being intrinsically motivated. I know that at school no one forces me to work. In fact, if I didn't have an intrinsic desire to learn at school, I would not be doing well in life. So, I think you need to have that drive to want to know more. Open-minded is another one. So, you need to look for more and not only things you like, but also things you haven't thought about or people who do not share your opinion. So, I like learning about this, but there is a different completely view on life that I am interested in as well. Reflective is then the ability

to go back and go, 'Look, what am I paying attention to too much and what too little? And how do I balance this out?' And there we go with balanced. So, I think it is really the cycle of autonomous learning. You have to have an interest in something and then you need to be able to balance that interest with other things. And you need to be able to go back and look what I am doing right and what I am doing wrong and how do I change it?

What about the ones you didn't mention so far?

Well, communicators ... is kind of ... you can learn autonomously however you want. And that where I kind of think, there are people who like to learn by themselves. I personally know that I like to discuss things with another person. So, I think communicators is a very important thing in my autonomous learning, but it doesn't have to be in everyone's. It's really ... I think about autonomy is that you get to decide whether you want to be a communicator or more of a laid-back person. And then thinkers and knowledgeable is kind of ... you know, you will get there by learning autonomously. It's not you don't need it for learning autonomously, but hopefully it will allow you to get there faster. Risk-takers is one that I think kind of fits into the idea of autonomous learning. But at the same time, I think autonomy is also about knowing when the risk is too much and set your own boundaries. So, I really think that the autonomous learning enables you to become a risk-taker and not the other way round. And then caring of course ... it's the same. So, if you reached a point where you are reflective, and open-minded, and all that, then you are at a point where you can actually care about stuff and take care of yourself. You know, what can I do, what can't I do? You learn how to give up on certain ideas or how to follow them. You can start, you know, to show empathy towards other people.

Teachers

- Now I would like to talk to you about your teachers and the way they teach. When you look at the items of the questionnaire, can you think of a teacher who you believe is particularly eager to promote these qualities in his or her students? You do not need to mention his or her name.

Uhm, yes. I think the teacher that is most eager to do it is definitely my history teacher. In fact, he has taken a complete sidestep from lecturing all of that. He just throws resources at us and says, 'You have class time for that, but if you have something else to do then do that and work on this at home'. So he helps you organize your own learning and gives you the framework for it. I think though he is also going a tiny step too far where he doesn't teach very much. I think the best teacher who ... implements it the best is my econ teacher. Because my econ teacher spends time in class. He doesn't let you just be completely unsupervised. So in class he is explaining it, he is answering questions. So, usually the way he structures it is he spends ten minutes explaining something and then he spends the next fifty minutes of the period by answering questions of people. So, it's very focused on us, but it's also very focused on knowledge transfer from him to us and not just knowledge floating around the room and us randomly picking it up.

- If NO: Can you maybe think of teachers who you believe attempt to promote at least one of those qualities in their students?

- If YES: What are some ways in which he or she promotes these qualities? Can you think of a concrete example or a situation in which he or she has promoted these qualities? [not asked because already answered]
 - What kind of materials does/did he or she use for that? (e.g. handouts, graphic organizers, posted links on the school's learning platform, videos, classroom displays, stories, other resources or ways of teaching)

Differentiation

- In most classrooms, you usually have students who are a bit better than the rest, some who struggle a bit more with the subject than the rest, and then there are some who are something in-between and are neither particularly good or bad in the subject. How well do you think do your teachers deal with such mixed-ability groups? In other words, in what ways do you think do your teachers differentiate among students in their classroom?

Well, I think, I do very well in most of my classes. I feel like the teachers who are really good at this are my econ and physics teachers. They don't really worry about that ... they won't judge you if you get a lower grade and they won't come to you ask you, 'Hey, do you think you need some extra help?' They expect you to be independent and go get it yourself. So he is like, 'You now, if you want extra help I am here for you, but I am not going to push you to do extra work and get a better grade because you have your own priorities and you may think that grade is enough for you'. So, for econ, he is open and always answers questions, but there are people who sometimes freeze and he goes, 'You know, you know what you got and you know I am always here and you know where to find any information'. And I think that's kind of how the class was able to shuffle out of that and all shuffle into some higher grades because the teacher has been capable of going, 'You know, I am here'. And there are teachers who I believe are not as good at this. Like, my English teacher, who I believe she just kind of tries to force something for the whole group. There is always something at the end of period to do for everyone and it is always at the same level because she is always pushing everyone to that same level. However, I think what she does that kind of makes it hard for people who aren't doing as well to kind of grow and reach that level is she doesn't actually inquire whether we understood what we did, she just kind of makes us do the work. So, I think what's important is going ... not ... not forcing work on people. Instead going, you do however work, however much work you feel you need in order to master this task, and if you need more work, you can approach me and if you need more help you can approach me. But I am not going to force you to do anything.

So, what exactly is it that these teachers do to help if there is a student who approaches them and asks for help?

Well, I know my econ teacher, he usually goes very methodically. So when you go and ask him a question, first what he will do is he will go through that specific example you are having a problem with with you on the board and take time out of his schedule. And then when he is done with it he will give you more problems like it and he does them with you. So I think he is very topic oriented and I think that's what works best. And then my math teacher, he usually sits in the cafeteria during lunch break and he goes, 'I am there for you and anyone who needs help

can come to me, whether you are in my class or not. Anything, just approach me and I will do the math with you. But then he doesn't give you any resources with it. So once you are done with that one problem, you are going to have to go to him again next time you have another problem. So it is kind of continued guidance.

- What kind of materials does/did he or she use for that? (e.g. handouts, graphic organizers, posted links on the school's learning platform, videos, classroom displays, stories, other resources or ways of teaching) [not asked]

ICT

- To what extent do you believe that access to the internet, a computer, and other electronic devices can help you become a more autonomous learner?

I feel like it's a very fine line. There are classes like history where I feel like we are given too much access to a computer. We are all just sitting there, half of us are on facebook and that's not productive. Sure, we will catch up the work at home but I feel like we should really be using that time and we are missing out on some things. But then there is other classes like econ where technology is very well used because he runs a technology-based class. So he starts teaching and for everything he is explaining there is a document available with notes of what he is saying. So you can jump ahead, you can go back, you can do all that. Also, the way the room is set up, you can't really hide. There is no place where you can just go on facebook because the way he teaches us he is very interactive, he walks around the room, he talks to everyone individually. So really you are encouraged to work because everyone around you is working. While in history that's not really how it is. And then there is classes where there is no technology allowed and I don't like that. I think the technology is very important but there has to be a point where ... when you are listening to the teacher, everyone should have their computers closed. And then when you are doing work, your computer should be allowed for googling and doing research. So I think that's a very useful tool and it should be used in classrooms for ... whenever you are working. Not whenever you are listening or learning from the person. And I feel that most importantly when it's being used there has to be some sort of control, but like group control. But ... they used to have this program where the teacher could actually see everyone's screen and that just makes you paranoid in my opinion. What's nice is when the teacher walks around and sometimes he is on your side and sometimes he is behind you, but he is not walking around to supervise you. He is walking around to help and he is kind of joking around with people about 'Hey, get back to the work' and I think that's really working because if you are in an environment where you can really work as well.

- Do you believe that if you had not the possibility to use information and communication technology for school you would be less autonomous in your learning? [not asked]
- To what extent do your teachers use information and communication technology in their classroom to promote learner autonomy (i.e. help you learn more independently)? [not asked]

Freedom

- To what extent do you think it is important for teachers to provide choices of different tasks to promote learner autonomy (i.e. help you learn more independently)? Do you think that if a teacher provides a variety of choices it helps students become more autonomous in their learning?

I think it does. I always hate when there is only one way of doing things. I like it when it when teachers give you options. But I think when teachers say that you do not need to hand it in it is kind of a big step. On the one hand you can choose to do whatever you want or you can choose not to do anything. And so the idea is that ... I like it when teachers give you broad idea and say, 'You can do this, this, and this. Choose one of them and hand it in to me'. I don't think they should be giving grades for that specific instance, but just checking that you are actually doing something.

Can you think of a concrete example where teachers give you choices?

Well, again, I think my econ teacher gives us kind of a packet of worksheets for each one and he goes, 'Hand in one worksheet next time'. So you just choose one.

And that's in-class work?

Yea, that's in-class work. As in, he will give you time in class to do it but you might not get it done. So you will have to finish it at home. Meanwhile, my math teacher kinda does the opposite. He gives us homework every week, due the next week. And he says, 'Hand it in, I'll grade you just as a way of measuring yourself. It doesn't go into your gradebook. If you don't hand it in, I'm not gonna come looking for it. You know, it's not that important'. I've never handed it in. I mean, sometimes I did the work, but I never handed it in. There is a point to which I feel like I am not being held to doing it so slowly I've just started not doing it. Although I am doing fine in math, I feel like I would be doing better if I was doing that work and if I was being held to that. (laughs). And it would be better if he said, 'You know, hand it in'. But he says, 'You know what, you can choose between this and that'. You know.

- Do your teachers normally give you a variety of tasks to choose from? Or can you think of a teacher who usually provides a range of choices? Again, there is no need to mention the name of that teacher. [not asked]
 - What kind of tasks and in what situations?
 - Why do you think they do that?

Language

As the language of instruction at this school is English, a language that is different from most students' first language, I would like to ask you a few questions about that.

- In how far do you think does being taught in English influence your learning?

- Do you think it would be much different if everything was taught in your native language? Why or why not?

*I feel like, for me it's a very complicated thing because I was ... my native languages are *censored*[two European languages] because *censored*[personal information]. I learned English six years ago. And I mean, I am seventeen so that was rather late. But I think what's important is that English is very much my mother tongue at this point. It's my first language. So, I find it easier to express concepts in English, I find it easier to learn in English kind of because I've learned in English for the past six years. I know the vocabulary in English, I know how to debate in English because I've done the debate club. *censored*[personal information] I think that English is a good language to learn from because it is very broad and and it allows you to transfer knowledge to other subjects. At the same time, I noticed that there are people who are not very good at English. So, for them it might be a little harder. But what I love is that we don't have a single teacher that doesn't speak one of the most perfect spoken English versions that I have met. So, in a way they speak very very well, they make very very few mistakes. They almost never make native speaker mistakes. But they also never make other mistakes. So while they are teaching, they are also transferring a very very good style of speaking and also a very very good style of English.*

- Do you think it would be much easier for you? Would it have a huge impact on your grades? [not asked]

- To what extent do your subject teachers, i.e. any teacher who is not teaching you a language, pay attention to language aspects
 - in the classroom?
 - outside of the classroom / in homework assignments?

Well, I know that language never gets graded. That's important to me also because I think that the content of an essay should never be graded by its spelling. And that's something I find important because I used to be someone who did not speak so good English. I learned English in high school and in middle school. So, I would find it very unfair towards certain people if spelling was graded. Uhm ... I know on the other hand, however, while there is no emphasis on spelling or all of that, what I find there is a lot of emphasis on is definitions and understanding what words you are using and making sure you are not just blabbering English words, you are not just using your thesaurus. You actually have a broad range of words to explain something. That's important in economics and history where definitions are graded as well as in maths where you have to things in a correct way. So I think that that's a very important aspect. I know in physics you can answer a question in many different ways as long as it means the same thing but it's very easy to be off by a few words and then it doesn't mean the same thing anymore. So they are very specific about precision of language and knowing what you are saying and not just saying random stuff.

- Can you think of any resources your teachers use in order to help you or other students with the language barrier?

(e.g. handouts, graphic organizers, posted links on the school's learning platform, videos, classroom displays, stories, other resources or ways of teaching)

Well, I ... I don't really know ... I haven't really been part of this group. But I know that the people learning English have a different English class. So their English teacher will actually help them with their school work. But I do feel like none of my teachers are incapable of being English teachers. I feel like all of them are capable of helping those students. So when someone gives an answer and it's not correct, they will go, 'Okay, I see what you are saying but that's not correct' and he kind of goes into that explanations. And he takes his time and goes like, 'Guys, work on this individually for some time, I'm gonna explain this to him' and I find that very respectful.

Interview 7

Background Information

First, I would like to start asking you a few questions about your school and your background. This is for me to get a better idea of you as an internationally-minded student.

Question	Answer
Grade level / age group <i>What grade are you in? How old are you?</i>	Grade 12, 17 years old
Curriculum at school <i>What curricula or academic programs does your school offer? (Besides the IB).</i>	IB
Language of instruction at school <i>What is the language of instruction at your school? Are there any other languages used (besides in foreign language classes)?</i>	English
Number of students <i>How many students are enrolled in your school?</i>	Approximately 1,500
Number of faculty members <i>How many faculty members does your school employ?</i>	Approximately 300
Other staff members <i>How many other staff members does your school employ? For example: any kind of teaching support staff, IT, maintenance, security, kitchen staff etc.</i>	Lots of security, lots of kitchen staff for cafes and cafeteria, lots of support staff for various areas and subjects
Facilities & Equipment <i>What kind of facilities does your school offer?</i> <i>What kind of equipment is available at your school and in the classrooms? (e.g. projector, laptops, tablets etc)</i>	Large swimming pool, football pitch, volleyball pitch, dance studio, gymnastics room, theatre; everything is provided in classroom, students only bring their laptops (pens, paper, books, smartboard etc is all there)

Other information about the school (certain programs offered, specializations, school environment etc) <i>Is there anything else you can tell me about your school? Does your school offer any additional programs? Are there any specializations? What is your school environment like? What is it that makes your school unique or different from other schools you have been to?</i>	The school offers it's own high school diploma which allows you to take IB classes but there will be no official IB testing during the year and no final official exams at the end (thus, also no IB diploma; instead American-style high school diploma); school offers lower-level courses to prepare students for the IB. The school is very large and very well resourced, lots of academic support staff; lots of advisors who don't teach but only supervise projects and papers; lots of career counselors;
Experience at school <i>How long have you been attending this school?</i>	2 years
Subjects <i>What subjects are you taking this year (at SL or HL)?</i>	HL: economics, history, English language and literature SL: French, biology, math studies
Favorite subject/class <i>What is your favorite subject or class and why?</i>	English and economics. Exams for those two subjects are very essay-based which is one of the student's strengths. Teachers of both subjects are also favorite teachers (very prepared, well-informed)
Least favorite subject/class <i>What is your least favorite subject or class and why?</i>	French (student is less proficient in French than most other students in her class)
Satisfaction with school <i>Are you generally happy with the school you are currently attending? Why or why not?</i>	Yes, the school prepares its students very well for IB exams
Gender <i>male / female / other</i>	female

Learner autonomy

The overall research question of my topic is: "How can learner autonomy be fostered at IB schools?". If you don't know the term "learner autonomy", you might be familiar with similar concepts such as "self-directed learning", "independent learning", or "self-regulation".

*I will ask you a few questions about learner autonomy in relation to your school and the curriculum – **the International Baccalaureate program** – it offers.*

- First of all, have you ever heard of the term "learner autonomy" or any of its related concepts: "self-directed learning", "independent learning", or "self-regulation"?

- [if YES]: Can you try to explain in your own words what learning autonomously means and what kind of characteristics an autonomous learner should have?
- [if NO → move on to next question]

Yes. I would say that self-directed learning at our school is guided through the teacher who guide you. They provide more resources, in the classroom you can be more independent in terms of what you want to learn today. You can choose different parts of the curriculum.

- I will give you now a short questionnaire that contains characteristics often associated with autonomous learners. This will also give you better idea of what is meant by “learner autonomy”. Please take a moment to read through each of the questions and try to evaluate how good you think you are at these things.
[hand over questionnaire]

I can...	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
determine realistic and reachable goals for school		X		
select appropriate methods and techniques to study and complete work effectively		X		
monitor my own learning	X			
evaluate the progress of my own learning	X			
I...	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
get actively involved in social aspects of learning (e.g. group or pair work, discussions, collaborating/working together)	X			
interpret new information in a way that activates my prior knowledge of the subject		X		
am intrinsically motivated			X	
am in control of my own decision-making		X		
take responsibility for the outcomes of my actions	X			
have confidence in myself when it comes to my school work		X		

- Thank you for taking your time. [take questionnaire and look at it so that the participant can also see].
Now I want you to look at your answers and think about your reasoning. Why do you think that this [point at Strongly Agree and Agree items] is something you are good at or

you generally do? And why do you think is this [point at Disagree and Strongly Disagree items] something you are not good at or you generally do not do?

- [eliciting more specific information] Can you come up with an example or situation for that?
- [Discuss questionnaire with participant, make sure participant can see questionnaire the entire time and refer to it]

I would say in terms of monitoring my learning, evaluating the process of my learning ... I don't think that I have a problem with it, I think we've all had access to the syllabus and the textbooks. We can also see where I have gone wrong and where I have gone right. In terms of getting actively involved in social aspects, uhm ... a lot of my subjects are hugely collaborative and discussion-based. So, we spend a huge amount on that. We are very talkative and very active and this is something I really enjoy. And in terms of taking responsibility for the outcomes I put "strongly agree" here because I don't think I have a problem with understanding where I went wrong, why I say I might have gotten a four on an exam and why I may have gotten a six on that one. And we have a website where they publish the results, so it's quite easy to see how badly you performed or how good you were. I am not particularly worried about when I get a bad grade. And then intrinsically motivated, I selected "disagree" because I do feel like in a lot of the subjects where I have a lot of independent work, so that's English, and economics, and history ... uh ... I do not think I am very motivated. I may be good at those subjects, but I think I am much more motivated to study for French because we are given a lot of homework for French which takes out a lot of work from my personal study routine.

Learner profiles

- Here is a list of **IB learner profiles** [hand official IB document with page of learner profiles]. Take a look at those learner profiles and the list of characteristics of autonomous learners [point at questionnaire]. Which of these 10 attributes – if any - do you think are representative of promoting learner autonomy?
 - You may choose as many or as few as you want.
 - If you think that all of them or none of them represent learner autonomy, that is also fine.
 - Can you explain why you think this attribute is representative / not representative of learner autonomy?

I would say these three here apply the most [points at communicators, balanced, reflective]. I think reflective applied quite well to being able to monitor your own learning and evaluating the process of your own learning. We do a lot of evaluations at our school where we sort of have reflection time where we have to write reflections on tasks and how it went. Communicators only because getting involved with the social aspects of learning involves communication, but also taking responsibility in your grades and maybe also setting realistic goals. Maybe just sort of in communication with your teachers or your peers. And then finally, balanced. Only because I think a lot of decision-making, a lot of confidence, and

a lot of your evaluation comes from a balanced life. You can't necessarily set goals that are too far out, too optimistic, if you are ... that would be unbalanced.

Okay, thank you. And which ones do you think are maybe not as important when it comes to promoting learner autonomy?

Maybe caring. The description of caring makes it seem like it's a fine attribute and trait, but not necessarily applicable to knowledge, and motivation, and decision-making. And uhm (long pause) I think caring ... is the only one that wouldn't apply. All the other one's are actually quite general.

Teachers

- Now I would like to talk to you about your teachers and the way they teach. When you look at the items of the questionnaire, can you think of a teacher who you believe is particularly eager to promote these qualities in his or her students? You do not need to mention his or her name.

I would definitely say that my history teacher is very much ... sort of takes on this idea of independent learning and these goals. Just because, in history class, we have a lot of Harknesses, which is sort of group discussions on the table. They are so motivated. So they are based on articles and he has no idea whether we read them or not. So, you just kind of join in when you feel like it and communicate what your thoughts are. He allows us to choose our preferred study methods. So, sometimes he would give us a paper or a task that we have to make this list. But then, there are students who just come to class for the first five minutes and then they just go to the study room for the next hour and study. He obviously has no idea what we are doing and whether we are working, which I think for a lot of students worked, but for some students it doesn't. And he definitely makes sure that we take responsibility for the outcomes of our actions. So, he is not light ... if he wants to give you criticism when he thinks we have not been working hard on a test or he thinks we are not working hard on a test ... he definitely forces his students to take responsibility for their learning in his class. Whereas I think a lot of teachers take on responsibility for themselves if a student doesn't do well in his class.

- If NO: Can you maybe think of teachers who you believe attempt to promote at least one of those qualities in their students?
- If YES: What are some ways in which he or she promotes these qualities? Can you think of a concrete example or a situation in which he or she has promoted these qualities?
 - What kind of materials does/did he or she use for that? (e.g. handouts, graphic organizers, posted links on the school's learning platform, videos, classroom displays, stories, other resources or ways of teaching)

So, at the beginning of the year, he gave us access to the history guide and gave us the syllabus. And from that he sort of highlights everything we will have to go through and you need to have this amount of knowledge by this amount of time. And I think, throughout the school year, every single time that we get on to a new topic, he would go back to the history guide and point out 'We are learning this guys, you need to have this done by the end of this time'. So sort of like, 'I am

giving you two months to do the topic of China, this is all that is part of China and I will be running small group discussions and provide resources on Google Classroom'. But, it doesn't matter what you do, as long as by the end of this year you have this amount of knowledge and this amount of tasks done.

Differentiation

- In most classrooms, you usually have students who are a bit better than the rest, some who struggle a bit more with the subject than the rest, and then there are some who are something in-between and are neither particularly good or bad in the subject. How well do you think do your teachers deal with such mixed-ability groups? In other words, in what ways do you think do your teachers differentiate among students in their classroom?

*I think that *censored*[name of school] has an advantage because we have very small class sizes, so they do have a lot of time to sort of work with the students individually. I know another technique is that they pair students together. So maybe high-achieving students and low-achieving students work together and we have a lot of very mixed tables and groups. I don't think any of our teachers ever allowed us to form our own groups. It's more they dictate who sits with who when we are doing group exercises. Otherwise, I think our school does really well in terms of helping students who struggle a bit more. I haven't really benefitted from that because there isn't a subject where I am necessarily doing worse than a five. But I know there are a lot of students who go to extra learning and meet up with teachers after school. So there is learning support ... I have tutored our twelve-year students. So teachers would come to me and ask me, 'Hey, can you help this one. I am sort of away for the weekend or I am busy'. Regrading the high-achieving students who sort of want to progress through it, I know that when I was approached by a teacher for my EE. So they do come to you and tell you, 'Hey, why don't you do your EE on this? This would be good for you". We do a program called the GCB, the Global Citizens Diploma, where they ... it's an online thing where you write six or so blog entries. And I think most students who joined that were approached by a teacher that said, 'I think you are doing well, you could do this extra work on top of what you are doing right now in order to promote yourself and get better grades for college'. That sort of stuff.*

- What kind of materials does/did he or she use for that? (e.g. handouts, graphic organizers, posted links on the school's learning platform, videos, classroom displays, stories, other resources or ways of teaching)

I think ... I don't think it's necessarily any physical resources we are given to differentiate in class. But that there is a lot of teachers make available a list of resources on a given topic on Google Classroom. On our Google Classroom, we would have a lot of articles, a book or movie that has been made and similar things. While I don't think that there is anything additional that has been made, and while we are not expected to learn them, if he or she is struggling we can go there for ideas and my teacher does come around sometimes ... So when we have written an essay and it's not necessarily a seven but a six, she does come around and says, 'Hey, I know you can better. Maybe it would be good if you take a look at this to get up one more grade". So we are provided with a lot of online resources to help us get further.

ICT

- To what extent do you believe that access to the internet, a computer, and other electronic devices can help you become a more autonomous learner?
 - Do you believe that if you had not the possibility to use information and communication technology for school you would be less autonomous in your learning?

*100%. Definitely. No doubt about it. I have been in both situations. So for IGCSE, I have been at a school where we didn't use the internet, we could borrow laptops once a month. And now in *censored*[name of school] there is not a day that goes by where I don't get out my laptop for something. And I think being without a laptop in that situation meant that you depend on your teacher for all your information. So in subjects like history, whatever version of history they gave you was the real version of history and it can be quite biased in that sense. But when we are doing our own research on history, we get different perspectives because we are all googling the things. And I think a lot of teachers expect that we will all have different idea when we write essays for exams just because we will have all been expected to google or search for our individual resources. Otherwise, I think I am completely dependent on my laptop. So, whether it is in French translating things, or whether it is in history googling facts while in the middle of a discussion or debate. I think when you keep record of everything you can always go back. And I think it's very useful because you can always go to your laptop whereas when you have to go to your teacher they may be busy or give you an answer that you are not satisfied with.*

- To what extent do your teachers use information and communication technology in their classroom to promote learner autonomy (i.e. help you learn more independently)?
[not asked because already answered]

Freedom

- To what extent do you think it is important for teachers to provide choices of different tasks to promote learner autonomy (i.e. help you learn more independently)? Do you think that if a teacher provides a variety of choices it helps students become more autonomous in their learning?

I do think it makes them more self-directed. I also think that they can be disadvantages. I think it depends from subject to subject, So for instance, in a subject like economics or history, it's very information based. There is a large base of resources you can look at. You don't necessarily need to know every little fact. It's helpful when the teacher says, 'Would you like to do a Powerpoint on this or would you like to do a class paper, or would you like to go over the textbook. And in those subjects, I know favorite teachers will give me an option in what I want to do. But I think there are subjects, I know in mathematics or French, when given an option, a lot of students, especially those who struggle, will choose the easiest one. And then the teacher obviously, once you have given the option ... you know, a lot of students will just choose the easiest one. And in that sense,

giving options doesn't necessarily help you, but it does allow you to take responsibility because you know when you are taking the easier paper you will not be as prepared.

- Do your teachers normally give you a variety of tasks to choose from? Or can you think of a teacher who usually provides a range of choices? Again, there is no need to mention the name of that teacher.
 - What kind of tasks and in what situations?
 - Why do you think they do that?

I think most of teachers don't provide choices until the last months close to the exam. I think a lot of the teachers expect us to know how we study, what we need to prepare for and how. But definitely at the start when you are just coming in the IB, the teachers want the process to go into a certain direction. So they will want us to do as well as we can on the first few exams that come from the teachers personally and not from the IB.

Language

As the language of instruction at this school is English, a language that is different from most students' first language, I would like to ask you a few questions about that.

- In how far do you think does being taught in English influence your learning? [not asked because participant's first language is English]
 - Do you think it would be much different if everything was taught in your native language? Why or why not?
 - Do you think it would be much easier for you? Would it have a huge impact on your grades?
- To what extent do your subject teachers, i.e. any teacher who is not teaching you a language, pay attention to language aspects
 - in the classroom?
 - outside of the classroom / in homework assignments?

I think definitely that while most marking rubrics don't include language aspects, I definitely benefit a lot from sort of having the ability to write an essay or having read a lot of English books. Whereas a lot of people in my class, they may be speaking perfect English and are maybe good at communicating, but in the exams they fall short on writing an essay because there is a particular style of writing an essay. So while teachers don't pay a huge amount of attention to our English skills, when they are marking our exams, they know what the IB examiner is expecting and they know the level they have to mark it when they make these sort of mistakes or when the idea is not so clear. So, in that sense, the IB is quite biased towards English-speakers because a lot of the exams are very very English based and require lots of clarity.

- Can you think of any resources your teachers use in order to help you or other students with the language barrier?
(e.g. handouts, graphic organizers, posted links on the school's learning platform, videos, classroom displays, stories, other resources or ways of teaching)

I don't think that any of my friends have struggled in terms of their English. The only time I would have noticed a teacher pointing out an English mistake would be in writing essays where they correct things as they are reading the essay and marking it. Otherwise, I never would have noticed anyone ever making a mistake in English that is big enough so the teacher would point it out.

Interview 8

Background Information

First, I would like to start asking you a few questions about your school and your background. This is for me to get a better idea of you as an internationally-minded student.

Question	Answer
Grade level / age group <i>What grade are you in? How old are you?</i>	Graduated 1 year ago
Curriculum at school <i>What curricula or academic programs does your school offer? (Besides the IB).</i>	IB
Language of instruction at school <i>What is the language of instruction at your school? Are there any other languages used (besides in foreign language classes)?</i>	English
Number of students <i>How many students are enrolled in your school?</i>	Approximately 3,000
Number of faculty members <i>How many faculty members does your school employ?</i>	Approximately 300
Other staff members <i>How many other staff members does your school employ? For example: any kind of teaching support staff, IT, maintenance, security, kitchen staff etc.</i>	Kitchen, security, gardening, IT, drama support, music support, learning support (e.g. for dyslexic students)
Facilities & Equipment <i>What kind of facilities does your school offer? What kind of equipment is available at your school and in the classrooms? (e.g. projector, laptops, tablets etc)</i>	Lots of sports facilities, music room, IT and ICT rooms, drama rooms, art rooms; very well equipped school; each department has it's own building with facilities relevant to that department; smartboards, laptops
Other information about the school (certain programs offered, specializations, school environment etc) <i>Is there anything else you can tell me about your school? Does your school offer any additional programs? Are there any specializations? What is your school environment like? What is it that makes your school unique or different from other schools you have been to?</i>	Very international environment, very diverse; very supportive teachers, people care about each other; lots of counselors;

Experience at school <i>How long have you been attending this school?</i>	Grade 4-12, 9 years
Subjects <i>What subjects are you taking this year (at SL or HL)?</i>	HL: English, history, business SL: Thai Language A, math, biology
Favorite subject/class <i>What is your favorite subject or class and why?</i>	Biology (loves the subject, very good teacher who made learning fun and very hands-on)
Least favorite subject/class <i>What is your least favorite subject or class and why?</i>	History (lots of rote learning, lots of writing and interpretation)
Satisfaction with school <i>Are you generally happy with the school you are currently attending? Why or why not?</i>	yes
Gender <i>male / female / other</i>	female

Learner autonomy

The overall research question of my topic is: “How can learner autonomy be fostered at IB schools?”. If you don’t know the term “learner autonomy”, you might be familiar with similar concepts such as “self-directed learning”, “independent learning”, or “self-regulation”.

*I will ask you a few questions about learner autonomy in relation to your school and the curriculum – **the International Baccalaureate program** – it offers.*

- First of all, have you ever heard of the term “learner autonomy” or any of its related concepts: “self-directed learning”, “independent learning”, or “self-regulation”?

Yea, I’ve heard of independent learning,

- [if YES]: Can you try to explain in your own words what learning autonomously means and what kind of characteristics an autonomous learner should have?
- [if NO → move on to next question]

So I feel that in independent learning you get guided in a direction, but within that direction you have to understand what you are learning yourself and how you learn it so you can learn most efficiently.

- I will give you now a short questionnaire that contains characteristics often associated with autonomous learners. This will also give you better idea of what is meant by “learner autonomy”. Please take a moment to read through each of the questions and try to evaluate how good you think you are at these things.
[hand over questionnaire]

I can...	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
determine realistic and reachable goals for school		X		
select appropriate methods and techniques to study and complete work effectively		X		
monitor my own learning		X		
evaluate the progress of my own learning			X	
I...	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
get actively involved in social aspects of learning (e.g. group or pair work, discussions, collaborating/working together)		X		
interpret new information in a way that activates my prior knowledge of the subject			X	
am intrinsically motivated		X		
am in control of my own decision-making		X		
take responsibility for the outcomes of my actions	X			
have confidence in myself when it comes to my school work		X		

- Thank you for taking your time. [take questionnaire and look at it so that the participant can also see].
Now I want you to look at your answers and think about your reasoning. Why do you think that this [point at Strongly Agree and Agree items] is something you are good at or you generally do? And why do you think is this [point at Disagree and Strongly Disagree items] something you are not good at or you generally do not do?
 - [eliciting more specific information] Can you come up with an example or situation for that?
 - [Discuss questionnaire with participant, make sure participant can see questionnaire the entire time and refer to it]

Well, I think I definitely take responsibility for the outcomes of my actions because that is just something I have learned to do. If you make a mistake you just own up to it. That's just how I learned to do things. So, that's why it kind of came through within my school work. So, for evaluating the progress of my own learning, I feel that this is a difficulty for me because let's say I do tests along the way, I still do not know where I am. So, I always have to ask the teacher where they think I am. I think it is difficult for me to interpret new information that activate prior knowledge because that's not the way I learn. Right at the end, I just go

through everything again. I don't really interpret the information and link it my previous information, I just kind of learn everything all over again. So, I disagree with that.

Learner profiles

- Here is a list of **IB learner profiles** [hand official IB document with page of learner profiles]. Take a look at those learner profiles and the list of characteristics of autonomous learners [point at questionnaire]. Which of these 10 attributes – if any - do you think are representative of promoting learner autonomy?
 - You may choose as many or as few as you want.
 - If you think that all of them or none of them represent learner autonomy, that is also fine.
 - Can you explain why you think this attribute is representative / not representative of learner autonomy?

So, for learner autonomy I think we definitely need to be inquirers because we have to develop our understanding and we have to strive to learn more. Definitely principled because we have to restrict ourselves what to do and what not to do. Reflective, you should know what you do know and what you don't know. I guess knowledgeable as well because you need knowledge to understand things. And thinker because you need to think. I think communicators as well because when you know something you need to be able to express it and explain it to other people to show that you understand it. Those five, six actually. Yes.

And which ones do you think may not be as important as those six you just mentioned?

Maybe ... I don't think caring is the most important. I guess you care about your work but it's not that important. Maybe risk-taking? Because I don't think you risk-take while learning. So, I think those two are the least important.

Teachers

- Now I would like to talk to you about your teachers and the way they teach. When you look at the items of the questionnaire, can you think of a teacher who you believe is particularly eager to promote these qualities in his or her students? You do not need to mention his or her name.
 - If NO: Can you maybe think of teachers who you believe attempt to promote at least one of those qualities in their students?
 - If YES: What are some ways in which he or she promotes these qualities? Can you think of a concrete example or a situation in which he or she has promoted these qualities?

Yes. So, he just really cares about your learning and always makes sure you understand it. If you don't understand it, he makes sure to explain it in a different way. And he really understands that people have individual ways of learning. So, he would have a plan set for class and ask you if you understand this and if you

don't he explains it again to you. So, he really makes it individualized and personal to you. I think that's why a lot of people get really good grades. And his goals are realistic, but because he is good at teaching, you can set them higher than in other classes. So, he is very motivated to teach. And he would use online resources and arrange the seating in a way so that all the people with laptops can sit together and not distract the people who don't use laptops. He will put the PowerPoint on the board, but he also provides print outs for us to take notes on. So everyone learns differently but he explains it the same.

Okay. And how does he double check whether everyone has understood?

Okay, so he will teach the class and do everything and then in the last ten minutes he will check back. Like a little mini test where he just asks some questions. He puts questions on the board and those would be the learning outcomes of the day. So he puts the learning outcomes on the board right at the beginning of class and he goes over it before we leave class.

- What kind of materials does/did he or she use for that? (e.g. handouts, graphic organizers, posted links on the school's learning platform, videos, classroom displays, stories, other resources or ways of teaching)

Well, really it's just his teaching because he has been doing it for so many years. Like, he has his own ways of being able to teach you. He has his own handouts and he also has posters with summaries of things we need to learn. Like, he would have notes of things that IB students have to know, ways on how to write up a lab report ... Apart from that, right before the exams, he gives us past papers and we can give it back to him and he will give us feedback. So I think that is maybe something that sticks out because maybe some other teachers don't constantly give you past papers.

Differentiation

- In most classrooms, you usually have students who are a bit better than the rest, some who struggle a bit more with the subject than the rest, and then there are some who are something in-between and are neither particularly good or bad in the subject. How well do you think do your teachers deal with such mixed-ability groups? In other words, in what ways do you think do your teachers differentiate among students in their classroom?

I think most of it is just goal setting. So, we all have to learn the same thing, but she will focus on students who need more help. Because we have to learn a lot ... Like let's say for business, I am not very good at finance. She will get you into groups of people to come up and she will say, 'Oh if you don't understand this, just stay back and I will come to you in a minute and will explain it so you understand it'. So if you don't get it, she will take her time and make sure you do.

- What kind of materials does/did he or she use for that? (e.g. handouts, graphic organizers, posted links on the school's learning platform, videos, classroom displays, stories, other resources or ways of teaching)
[not asked]

ICT

- To what extent do you believe that access to the internet, a computer, and other electronic devices can help you become a more autonomous learner?
 - Do you believe that if you had not the possibility to use information and communication technology for school you would be less autonomous in your learning?

I think for IB definitely. Because for IB you have to go out and do your own research a lot of the time. Especially for your extended essay, it's all about independent learning. So without internet, I don't think we would be able to be that independent because then we would have to rely on our teachers to tell us everything or use books. But I think the internet definitely helps you to learn independently.

- To what extent do your teachers use information and communication technology in their classroom to promote learner autonomy (i.e. help you learn more independently)?

Hmm (long pause) okay ... well, I think in class they don't really use anything. I think in class they just use PowerPoints and stuff. But at the end they will tell you that they added some links and stuff to look at at home. So some teachers do that and see if you understand it more. Our math teacher had his own math homepage where he puts stuff. But it's not really so much in the class, rather outside of class for your own learning.

Freedom

- To what extent do you think it is important for teachers to provide choices of different tasks to promote learner autonomy (i.e. help you learn more independently)? Do you think that if a teacher provides a variety of choices it helps students become more autonomous in their learning?

Uhm... yes and no. I don't think we should be provided with too many options. Because, personally, I think if I get too many options I would just be confused and not know where to start and I'll just be like, 'Oh, I give up.' But then if there is maybe four or five different choices because then you choose what to learn. But then again, if it doesn't fit the curriculum then you are not really learning in that sense.

- Do your teachers normally give you a variety of tasks to choose from? Or can you think of a teacher who usually provides a range of choices? Again, there is no need to mention the name of that teacher.
 - What kind of tasks and in what situations?
 - Why do you think they do that?

So yea, for one class, he would give us a range of tasks from easy to more difficult. So she would be like, 'Okay, if you understand the easy stuff, go to the more difficult task. If you understand that task go to the next task'. So, that's how we kind of split the different tasks. So, not really different topics, but more like difficulty that fits you.

Language

As the language of instruction at this school is English, a language that is different from most students' first language, I would like to ask you a few questions about that.

- In how far do you think does being taught in English influence your learning? [not asked because participant is a native speaker of English]
 - Do you think it would be much different if everything was taught in your native language? Why or why not?
 - Do you think it would be much easier for you? Would it have a huge impact on your grades?
- To what extent do your subject teachers, i.e. any teacher who is not teaching you a language, pay attention to language aspects
 - in the classroom?
 - outside of the classroom / in homework assignments?

I don't think any of them except for English look at language and how well you use language. I think they look more at the content. I guess if a sentence is really badly structured they will change it for you. But they are not too concerned about how well you speak English. And I think, at least in my year, a lot of students were really proficient. So it wasn't really a problem. But when I took HL English, we definitely had to look at that but apart from that, no not really.

- Can you think of any resources your teachers use in order to help you or other students with the language barrier?
(e.g. handouts, graphic organizers, posted links on the school's learning platform, videos, classroom displays, stories, other resources or ways of teaching)

I think they just had an EAL teacher to help them better their English. But apart from that extra support teacher, I don't think they gave any extra resources.

Interview 9

Background Information

First, I would like to start asking you a few questions about your school and your background. This is for me to get a better idea of you as an internationally-minded student.

Question	Answer
Grade level / age group <i>What grade are you in? How old are you?</i>	Graduated 1 year ago
Curriculum at school <i>What curricula or academic programs does your school offer? (Besides the IB).</i>	IB, AP
Language of instruction at school <i>What is the language of instruction at your school? Are there any other languages used (besides in foreign language classes)?</i>	English
Number of students <i>How many students are enrolled in your school?</i>	Approximately 1,200
Number of faculty members <i>How many faculty members does your school employ?</i>	Approximately 150
Other staff members <i>How many other staff members does your school employ? For example: any kind of teaching support staff, IT, maintenance, security, kitchen staff etc.</i>	Kitchen, security, assistants, ESL support, shadow teachers (e.g. for autistic students)
Facilities & Equipment <i>What kind of facilities does your school offer? What kind of equipment is available at your school and in the classrooms? (e.g. projector, laptops, tablets etc)</i>	Laptops, projectors, board, active boards, several sports clubs and equipment for that, lots of science labs
Other information about the school (certain programs offered, specializations, school environment etc) <i>Is there anything else you can tell me about your school? Does your school offer any additional programs? Are there any specializations? What is your school environment like? What is it that makes your school unique or different from other schools you have been to?</i>	Started out as a Catholic school and expanded very quickly; very disciplined and well-behaved students; very international staff

Experience at school <i>How long have you been attending this school?</i>	Since 1 st grade; i.e. 13 years
Subjects <i>What subjects are you taking this year (at SL or HL)?</i>	HL: business, Japanese, biology SL: chemistry, math, English
Favorite subject/class <i>What is your favorite subject or class and why?</i>	Biology; great teacher who is very passionate about her subject, uses very good visuals
Least favorite subject/class <i>What is your least favorite subject or class and why?</i>	Chemistry: teacher was not very experienced; English: didn't quite follow the IB curriculum, but knew what the IB expected, but he had a very unique teaching style
Satisfaction with school <i>Are you generally happy with the school you are currently attending? Why or why not?</i>	During 9-10 th grade it seemed that school did not care too much attention to teachers' qualifications
Gender <i>male / female / other</i>	female

Learner autonomy

The overall research question of my topic is: "How can learner autonomy be fostered at IB schools?". If you don't know the term "learner autonomy", you might be familiar with similar concepts such as "self-directed learning", "independent learning", or "self-regulation".

I will ask you a few questions about learner autonomy in relation to your school and the curriculum – **the International Baccalaureate program** – it offers.

- First of all, have you ever heard of the term "learner autonomy" or any of its related concepts: "self-directed learning", "independent learning", or "self-regulation"?
 - [if YES]: Can you try to explain in your own words what learning autonomously means and what kind of characteristics an autonomous learner should have?
 - [if NO → move on to next question]

I've heard the word 'autonomy' in my business course I took. It was about motivation ... like kind of related to skills... maybe in that sense.

- I will give you now a short questionnaire that contains characteristics often associated with autonomous learners. This will also give you better idea of what is meant by "learner autonomy". Please take a moment to read through each of the questions and try to evaluate how good you think you are at these things.
[hand over questionnaire]

I can...	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
determine realistic and reachable goals for school		X	X	
select appropriate methods and techniques to study and complete work effectively		X		
monitor my own learning		X	X	
evaluate the progress of my own learning		X		
I...	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
get actively involved in social aspects of learning (e.g. group or pair work, discussions, collaborating/working together)		X		
interpret new information in a way that activates my prior knowledge of the subject		X		
am intrinsically motivated		X	X	
am in control of my own decision-making		X		
take responsibility for the outcomes of my actions	X			
have confidence in myself when it comes to my school work	X	X		

[NB: participant ticked line between two boxes for three items because she could not make up her mind]

- Thank you for taking your time. [take questionnaire and look at it so that the participant can also see].
Now I want you to look at your answers and think about your reasoning. Why do you think that this [point at Strongly Agree and Agree items] is something you are good at or you generally do? And why do you think is this [point at Disagree and Strongly Disagree items] something you are not good at or you generally do not do?
 - [eliciting more specific information] Can you come up with an example or situation for that?
 - [Discuss questionnaire with participant, make sure participant can see questionnaire the entire time and refer to it]

Well ... I think I do pretty well in responsibility because I think I have just been taught that no matter what you do and what action you've commit to, you should take responsibility. So, you are the one who is doing it. And I feel like let's say if I miss an assignment then I am responsible and I say, 'Okay, I missed the assignment and I am responsible. I know I was supposed to be doing it'. For

goals and learning and being intrinsically motivated ... hmmm.. I think for school ... I don't select a specific goal. I think there is just a common code that I go by, you know. Like a passing grade (laughs). Hm... being intrinsically motivated ... sometimes there are subjects that I do find personally interesting. But even if I do find something personally interesting, it doesn't mean that I will always do super well or super bad. It kind of depends... it varies ... I mean, I know that school is a place where you go to educate yourself and since I am in university I also try to find out what I want to do in the future with this. But I still see it as a place of learning. Like, I still don't know exactly what I want to do with this degree. So, I think that I would ... I would delay that a little later... For monitoring my own learning, I don't really keep track of what I am learning I just kind of keep track of what I know more.

Learner profiles

- Here is a list of **IB learner profiles** [hand official IB document with page of learner profiles]. Take a look at those learner profiles and the list of characteristics of autonomous learners [point at questionnaire]. Which of these 10 attributes – if any - do you think are representative of promoting learner autonomy?
 - You may choose as many or as few as you want.
 - If you think that all of them or none of them represent learner autonomy, that is also fine.
 - Can you explain why you think this attribute is representative / not representative of learner autonomy?

I think being an inquirer definitely goes along with being intrinsically motivated. Because you want to learn, you are enthusiastic to learn about something and ... I think being knowledgeable definitely goes along with monitoring and evaluating because (long pause) well ... when you are learning it adds to your own knowledge and you are trying to develop this to your understanding. Like, regardless of your subject or anything in general... Communicators definitely goes along with the social aspects of learning because you are trying to ... I mean, communicators doesn't necessarily mean that you have to work with someone ... just being able to openly express yourself and being creative, getting your ideas across. Mhm (long pause) being principled definitely goes along with taking responsibility for your actions because you want to be disciplined, you want to have integrity. Mhm (long pause) let's see ... reflective, again kind of goes along with evaluative ... because you are trying to get an understanding, you are trying to reflect back on your strengths but also your weaknesses. I think being balanced goes back to the appropriate methods and techniques that you want to study effectively because even though you have school, you also have your personal life and you want to balance those. Hm (long pause) let's see (long pause) for risk-takers I might try to go with having confidence because I think you need confidence when it comes to your school work. It is kind of risk-taking when you think about it. It could be that when you take a course or do an activity that you don't have experience with, that's also risk-taking. But I feel that having confidence in your school work even though it is crap and still handing it in can be risk-taking (laughs). Nah... (long pause) I think thinkers goes along with interpreting new information. Again, you are being critical, you are being analytical of something. Uhhh ... The open-minded and caring, I don't really see it that much in here. I feel that this is more a personal thing and not school related. For the realistic and reachable goal thing, I think it's kind of in between these two,

principled and reflective. Maybe? For the risk-taker I am just joking, I don't really mean it. But these two [open-minded and caring] are more personal

Teachers

- Now I would like to talk to you about your teachers and the way they teach. When you look at the items of the questionnaire, can you think of a teacher who you believe is particularly eager to promote these qualities in his or her students? You do not need to mention his or her name.
 - If NO: Can you maybe think of teachers who you believe attempt to promote at least one of those qualities in their students?
 - If YES: What are some ways in which he or she promotes these qualities? Can you think of a concrete example or a situation in which he or she has promoted these qualities?

I think I see a few ... like trying to work effectively, evaluating your progress of your own learning, trying to be actively involved ... so, like in classes where we have like seminars and staff. Hm... taking responsibility ... also decision making. I think these qualities I will find in all of my teachers.

Okay. In what kind of situations? What would the teacher do?

I mean, when they hand you an assignment and they tell you that even when you don't hand it in to them it's still okay. Let's say one of my teachers, they will just give you an assignment and if you don't hand it in you will not get the grade. So, that's your own responsibility whether you do it or not, it's for your own learning and not for them. I think that's one part of it. ... Sometimes we had discussions in class, I mean, I find that a lot of my teachers were quite open-minded, like when we want to express our ideas. (long pause) Realistic goals, I think that would be more a counselor and not my teachers. Like, I've talked to a few counselors and they helped me in terms of what directions I take and what universities I should attend. So to me that's about reachable goals ...

- What kind of materials does/did he or she use for that? (e.g. handouts, graphic organizers, posted links on the school's learning platform, videos, classroom displays, stories, other resources or ways of teaching)

Hm... (long pause) I mean ... Most teachers in general they will give you assignments and projects, but then I feel like a lot of these qualities still kind of depend on the student. So let's say the students likes the course or likes the teacher, I think they will be motivated to do it. But if the teacher wants to foster those kind of qualities or the environment for the student to develop personally and also academically, I would say maybe like one to one. Or having like personal, private discussions would help. Like with my math teacher When I had some struggles I went to him and talked to him and he would help me because he knows I want to do better. (long pause). Yea.

Differentiation

- In most classrooms, you usually have students who are a bit better than the rest, some who struggle a bit more with the subject than the rest, and then there are some who are something in-between and are neither particularly good or bad in the subject. How well do you think do your teachers deal with such mixed-ability groups? In other words, in what ways do you think do your teachers differentiate among students in their classroom?

I think they can tell. Like, usually they would differentiate according to like scores. That would be more of an objective way. Subjectively, I think teachers can actually who is hard working and who is not. Like, when they teach, whoever hands in their assignments on time, or the students they talk to ... I think they can tell. So I think that's how they would differentiate.

- What kind of materials does/did he or she use for that? (e.g. handouts, graphic organizers, posted links on the school's learning platform, videos, classroom displays, stories, other resources or ways of teaching)

Hm... I actually never thought about that. (long pause) hm ...

So one example would be that the teacher has two hand outs and then says, 'Okay, this is assignment A, that is the more challenging one and this is assignment B, that's the easier one. Now you choose what is best for you' *Oh... wow, I don't think any of teachers ever did something like that. But I would find that pretty interesting if someone did it.*

ICT

- To what extent do you believe that access to the internet, a computer, and other electronic devices can help you become a more autonomous learner?
 - Do you believe that if you had not the possibility to use information and communication technology for school you would be less autonomous in your learning?

Uhm... I wouldn't say I would be less autonomous. I think there are good and bad things about not using technology. I think the good thing is that more people would actually go the library, get books, and do more reading and research. So, they would go for a more tradition way of research. I think the bad thing is that sometimes this can be a little inconvenient too. Or it can be ineffective if they don't know how to do that kind of research.

- To what extent do your teachers use information and communication technology in their classroom to promote learner autonomy (i.e. help you learn more independently)?

Some teachers kind of did lectures. So, they would open up the projector and have a powerpoint and present that. Sometimes, it's just a worksheet or a warm-up exercise. But other than that I would find that most of my teachers would do

old school. And I think most students would pay more attention that way because we have to take notes.

Freedom

- To what extent do you think it is important for teachers to provide choices of different tasks to promote learner autonomy (i.e. help you learn more independently)? Do you think that if a teacher provides a variety of choices it helps students become more autonomous in their learning?

I think that kind of depends on the course too. Some students might find it okay, like they would be happy to be able to choose what task to do. But some students might slack off or delay. But, for me personally, I think that's good if the teacher allows us to be more flexible. Sometimes ... But it might not necessarily good for everyone. I mean, there are different students with different background. Some people are visual learners, some prefer to take notes and stuff. So people will have different opinions about freedom.

- Do your teachers normally give you a variety of tasks to choose from? Or can you think of a teacher who usually provides a range of choices? Again, there is no need to mention the name of that teacher.

I think sometimes they did.

- What kind of tasks and in what situations?
- Why do you think they do that?

I think it was like assignments sometimes. Like, sometimes each student has a different task to do or they have different worksheets. I think that was the only flexibility I found. So ... just assignments ... ya. So in group work, everyone would be responsible for answering different questions... but also in classwork. Yea.

Language

As the language of instruction at this school is English, a language that is different from most students' first language, I would like to ask you a few questions about that.

- In how far do you think does being taught in English influence your learning?
 - Do you think it would be much different if everything was taught in your native language? Why or why not?

*Yes, actually. It would, I guess. Because language is not just something that you just speak, but when you do learn how to speak and write in it, I think you also get the cultural influence of it and of the IB. Because since they teach in English, I would say that a lot of the influence I get is quite Western. Now that I am in *censored*[name of university], sometimes the teachers, they would teach in *censored*[language of host country] if they don't know how to say a particular*

word and I heard from my friends that teachers who teach in *censored*[language of host country] have a very *censored*[name of host country] approach.

So, what do you mean by having a *censored*[language of host country] approach?

I find it very hard to explain unless you experience it yourself. Okay, maybe I can explain it with Japanese. I took a Japanese course and my Japanese teacher of course uses his language, so we have to practice Japanese. So I get to learn about Japanese culture, like how they think and their perspective. So, what my Japanese teacher in Japanese would teach, is probably very different from what an English teacher would teach in English.

- Do you think it would be much easier for you? Would it have a huge impact on your grades?

I think for some, yes. Because I still know a few students from my old school who still struggle with it. I actually still have some respect for them, it is still difficult. But for me, I was learning English since I was a little kid, so I don't have a problem with it.

- To what extent do your subject teachers, i.e. any teacher who is not teaching you a language, pay attention to language aspects
 - in the classroom?
 - outside of the classroom / in homework assignments?

*Well, in my school, they take speaking in English as a very serious matter. If someone spoke *censored*[language of host country], the teachers would tell you to speak in English because you have lots of foreign classmates and you shouldn't discriminate against them. Like, they don't understand. So, they take it pretty seriously. And outside the class, not so much because it's our free time. And for homework ... hm ... if it's for English, yes. But for science or math homework, no. As long as you get your ideas across, that is fine.*

- Can you think of any resources your teachers use in order to help you or other students with the language barrier?
(e.g. handouts, graphic organizers, posted links on the school's learning platform, videos, classroom displays, stories, other resources or ways of teaching)

*If the teachers, like if they know some *censored*[language of host country], they can translate it. Or they just use simpler phrases to get their ideas across. But they never really used any additional resources for that. All just oral when speaking in the classroom.*

Interview 10

Background Information

First, I would like to start asking you a few questions about your school and your background. This is for me to get a better idea of you as an internationally-minded student.

Question	Answer
Grade level / age group <i>What grade are you in? How old are you?</i>	Grade 11, 16 years old
Curriculum at school <i>What curricula or academic programs does your school offer? (Besides the IB).</i>	IB
Language of instruction at school <i>What is the language of instruction at your school? Are there any other languages used (besides in foreign language classes)?</i>	English
Number of students <i>How many students are enrolled in your school?</i>	Approximately 1,500
Number of faculty members <i>How many faculty members does your school employ?</i>	Approximately 300
Other staff members <i>How many other staff members does your school employ? For example: any kind of teaching support staff, IT, maintenance, security, kitchen staff etc.</i>	Many assistants for labs, canteen staff, security guards, cleaners
Facilities & Equipment <i>What kind of facilities does your school offer? What kind of equipment is available at your school and in the classrooms? (e.g. projector, laptops, tablets etc)</i>	Sports buildings, swimming pool, tennis courts, basketball courts, projector, interactive boards, students are given laptops (mac book)
Other information about the school (certain programs offered, specializations, school environment etc) <i>Is there anything else you can tell me about your school? Does your school offer any additional programs? Are there any specializations? What is your school environment like? What is it that makes your school unique or different from other schools you have been to?</i>	Lots of opportunities, lots of service groups, a very service-oriented school (e.g. founded a coffee company, charity concerts, cleaning up coral reefs); very competitive environment, but at the same time teachers are very encouraging; very supportive peers;

Experience at school <i>How long have you been attending this school?</i>	3 years
Subjects <i>What subjects are you taking this year (at SL or HL)?</i>	HL: psychology, biology, geography SL: English Language and Literature, French B, math studies
Favorite subject/class <i>What is your favorite subject or class and why?</i>	All are very interesting; psychology as a subject is very useful in everyday life;
Least favorite subject/class <i>What is your least favorite subject or class and why?</i>	None; TOK is hard to get your head around, very tedious class;
Satisfaction with school <i>Are you generally happy with the school you are currently attending? Why or why not?</i>	Yes. Hard at the beginning to adjust to because most students have attended this school for several years. This makes it very hard to enter the community as a new student.
Gender <i>male / female / other</i>	female

Learner autonomy

The overall research question of my topic is: “How can learner autonomy be fostered at IB schools?”. If you don’t know the term “learner autonomy”, you might be familiar with similar concepts such as “self-directed learning”, “independent learning”, or “self-regulation”.

*I will ask you a few questions about learner autonomy in relation to your school and the curriculum – **the International Baccalaureate program** – it offers.*

- First of all, have you ever heard of the term “learner autonomy” or any of its related concepts: “self-directed learning”, “independent learning”, or “self-regulation”?
 - [if YES]: Can you try to explain in your own words what learning autonomously means and what kind of characteristics an autonomous learner should have?
 - [if NO → move on to next question]

Yes, I have heard of them. Sometimes, in class, we get time where the teacher is teaching us .. like in biology, instead of the teacher standing there and telling us, he tells us to go get the textbooks out and find it out ourselves and then we discuss it and find it out as a class.

- I will give you now a short questionnaire that contains characteristics often associated with autonomous learners. This will also give you better idea of what is meant by “learner autonomy”. Please take a moment to read through each of the questions and try to evaluate how good you think you are at these things.
[hand over questionnaire]

I can...	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
determine realistic and reachable goals for school		X		
select appropriate methods and techniques to study and complete work effectively		X		
monitor my own learning		X		
evaluate the progress of my own learning		X		
I...	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
get actively involved in social aspects of learning (e.g. group or pair work, discussions, collaborating/working together)		X		
interpret new information in a way that activates my prior knowledge of the subject		X		
am intrinsically motivated		X		
am in control of my own decision-making		X		
take responsibility for the outcomes of my actions	X			
have confidence in myself when it comes to my school work		X		

- Thank you for taking your time. [take questionnaire and look at it so that the participant can also see].
Now I want you to look at your answers and think about your reasoning. Why do you think that this [point at Strongly Agree and Agree items] is something you are good at or you generally do? And why do you think is this [point at Disagree and Strongly Disagree items] something you are not good at or you generally do not do?
 - [eliciting more specific information] Can you come up with an example or situation for that?
 - [Discuss questionnaire with participant, make sure participant can see questionnaire the entire time and refer to it]

Uhm.. I think 'responsibility for my outcomes', maybe it's a cultural thing uhm But I feel like ... I think it's really a cultural thing. Like you don't run away from the decisions you make and you should like stay with them because if you made those decisions it's because you have a reason that you made those decisions. So, I strongly agree that taking responsibility for my actions does help also to understand the situation that I am fronting because it can put in perspective what is happening and why

When you say it's a cultural thing, what exactly do you mean by that?
I don't know, as a kid my parents always told me, 'Don't run away from your fears. You have to confront them'. So, I think that's what it is... yea.

Learner profiles

- Here is a list of **IB learner profiles** [hand official IB document with page of learner profiles]. Take a look at those learner profiles and the list of characteristics of autonomous learners [point at questionnaire]. Which of these 10 attributes – if any - do you think are representative of promoting learner autonomy?
 - You may choose as many or as few as you want.
 - If you think that all of them or none of them represent learner autonomy, that is also fine.
 - Can you explain why you think this attribute is representative / not representative of learner autonomy?

Uhm ... I think definitely thinkers because you have to think on your own and be very independent. You have to look at your progress and then think of your future and what you can do to get to that place. (long pause) I also think reflective because you look back. Maybe when you are studying alone, you have different methods. And sometimes it doesn't work and sometimes it does work. So, you look back and reflect on it and then change accordingly. Uhm (long pause) I guess you couldn't have thinkers and reflective without knowledgeable because you use your knowledge and you use that to help you understand what you are actually learning. Yea ... I would say those three

What about the ones that are maybe not representative of an autonomous learner?

Uh... maybe caring? Because I feel like an autonomous learner is very personal, is very independent. So, I don't see how caring can be associated with it. Uhm ... and (long pause) Yea also maybe communicators. Maybe you communicate with a teacher but it's not as ... or if you communicate collaboratively ... but at the same time you just do it ... like, that's how I picture an autonomous learner.

Teachers

- Now I would like to talk to you about your teachers and the way they teach. When you look at the items of the questionnaire, can you think of a teacher who you believe is particularly eager to promote these qualities in his or her students? You do not need to mention his or her name.
 - If NO: Can you maybe think of teachers who you believe attempt to promote at least one of those qualities in their students? [not asked]

Uhm ... I have two examples and they don't fit with all of them. So, I feel like ... yea in biology we do look at what we learn and we evaluate what we learn from the previous class. Like, we take out white boards at the beginning of class and

we revise what we did before. So no notes and no nothing and he asks us a questions and then we write it down and he sees if we all got it. And then once we got it, we connect with someone else and see if they got it and fill in information and give it back. And we also ... and then in biology, we learn new information but there is always connections as to what you learn. Like, three units before because it interconnects a lot. And I guess overall, the majority of teachers use ongoing reflections on like, for example in geography, after a test we have this reflection period on strengths and weaknesses and what we could do to improve for the next assessment that we do. Uhm (long pause) and ... and I guess they all pretty much motivate you, like the teachers. In times like stress and exams and they will come around an motivate you because there were people who were really stressed and were crying and in tears. So they were there to motivate and encourage us. And also with grades ... like, sometimes you can get low grades, but they just see it as a learning curve and it only gets better. Like you need to fall down in order to get back up.

- If YES: What are some ways in which he or she promotes these qualities? Can you think of a concrete example or a situation in which he or she has promoted these qualities?
 - What kind of materials does/did he or she use for that? (e.g. handouts, graphic organizers, posted links on the school's learning platform, videos, classroom displays, stories, other resources or ways of teaching)

Well we had this google doc with all our reflections on it. Sometimes, in geography, we are given articles to read. But we are not reading all the articles. So we are put into groups of four and each person reads an articles and after you give back what you read and you give back like statistics and examples for like case studies for the group. So, it takes less time, but at the same time, you are also learning more. And you are also processing the information you are saying because it's not just a piece of paper you are reading.

Differentiation

- In most classrooms, you usually have students who are a bit better than the rest, some who struggle a bit more with the subject than the rest, and then there are some who are something in-between and are neither particularly good or bad in the subject. How well do you think do your teachers deal with such mixed-ability groups? In other words, in what ways do you think do your teachers differentiate among students in their classroom?

There are some divisions in some classes, especially in higher level classes. But since they are smaller groups and more closed I guess we all share information, we all help each other out. Sometimes when we are working in groups, the teacher encourage us that we don't always work with the same person, so that we gain new perspectives, and new ways, and new opinions. So that a stronger person can be combined with a less strong person. So they really do promote working together.

- What kind of materials does/did he or she use for that? (e.g. handouts, graphic organizers, posted links on the school's learning platform, videos, classroom displays, stories, other resources or ways of teaching)

*No, I think everyone uses the same. Like, there are some differences, but they are not completely different so that you need different materials. Like, we are all at the same page cause we all did the MYP so we all started in a new ... cause I don't think the MYP didn't prepare us that well ... in my opinion the MYP at *censored*[name of school] didn't prepare us well for the IB, so I think we are all just sitting in the same boat, trying to get up. So ... yea.*

ICT

- To what extent do you believe that access to the internet, a computer, and other electronic devices can help you become a more autonomous learner?
 - Do you believe that if you had not the possibility to use information and communication technology for school you would be less autonomous in your learning?

The internet has its pros and cons, especially laptops. Like, the majority of people at our school, they type. And I am still sitting there with my books and write (laughs) because that's how I remember it. And before I test I have to recopy things because otherwise it doesn't enter my head. So, I feel with laptops sometimes people are just typing it away and they don't process it. So, I think that helps you process it quicker maybe. But, I guess, the internet does help you cause sometimes you didn't get something in class. We do get textbooks that we do use but sometimes an animation can help more or articles in real life situations can like further put everything together and it does help you in independent learning. Especially like the Google Classroom and all the things like teachers put resources on our school portal. So we don't go through them in class but if you need additional help you can go there. Also, textbooks and stuff. So, it has helped.

- To what extent do your teachers use information and communication technology in their classroom to promote learner autonomy (i.e. help you learn more independently)?
[not asked]

Freedom

- To what extent do you think it is important for teachers to provide choices of different tasks to promote learner autonomy (i.e. help you learn more independently)? Do you think that if a teacher provides a variety of choices it helps students become more autonomous in their learning?

Uhm... yes and no again. Like if we have too many choices, people would go with the easier routes maybe ... like I feel that this is what people would probably do. But at the same time, many choices can give you different- like many people just do whatever help you learn. So, I think it does help you with independent and autonomous learning. But, it can limit something in you. Like, in some way, you might not get the whole idea, but you do get the pieces. Yea.

- Do your teachers normally give you a variety of tasks to choose from? Or can you think of a teacher who usually provides a range of choices? Again, there is no need to mention the name of that teacher.
 - What kind of tasks and in what situations?
 - Why do you think they do that?

Uhm (long pause) well ... we do have ... like at some point in geography we have this page and the teacher puts all these new articles ... so because geography is like real life, it's all around us. So we see like all the real life situations and the news. So sometimes we can do that or we look at other articles and things. But I don't think it's such a variety. Like, such a difference. So, I don't think we get that much freedom. Yes, there is something we have to learn and you choose whether you want to learn it or not but you have to follow the syllabus cause it's a lot to learn in a short time. So, you have to go through a lot of things.

Language

As the language of instruction at this school is English, a language that is different from most students' first language, I would like to ask you a few questions about that.

- In how far do you think does being taught in English influence your learning?
 - Do you think it would be much different if everything was taught in your native language? Why or why not?
 - Do you think it would be much easier for you? Would it have a huge impact on your grades?

*Well, ... so, I have never lived in *censored*[country of origin]. Like I speak *censored*[parents' language] at home and I know all the grammar but I've never been taught in *censored*[language]. So I think it's normal for me. Like, I am bilingual, so it's really the same. But I definitely would be a different person if I lived my whole life in Italy and didn't get to know all these people and keep moving. So, I don't necessarily think in English except if it's like for school or sometimes not even. But, I guess it does open many windows for me at least in the future because English is known everywhere and like universities. So yea. I don't think it would affect it much.*

- To what extent do your subject teachers, i.e. any teacher who is not teaching you a language, pay attention to language aspects
 - in the classroom?
 - outside of the classroom / in homework assignments?

uhm (long pause). Well, in World Languages we do look at different languages. Like, I take French but at the same time we look at different languages. For example, the French-speaking countries and how they are affected. Like compared to the English-speaking countries and how ... like we are doing communication and media right now and we compared it with different countries and stuff. But I don't think anyone specifically says something about that.

So, that's in French?

Yea.

Oh okay ... Let me ask you again.

Oh, I'm sorry.

To what extent do your subject teachers, i.e. any teacher who is not teaching you a language, pay attention to language aspects in the classroom?

Oh oh ok. Not any. I mean, like some teachers recognize that there is many different nationalities in the classroom and all but they don't really pay attention to the language aspect.

- Can you think of any resources your teachers use in order to help you or other students with the language barrier?
(e.g. handouts, graphic organizers, posted links on the school's learning platform, videos, classroom displays, stories, other resources or ways of teaching)

That was a thing last year. Like, in my class there were some people who were in English B, so there was someone that would help them. But no ... not this year. I don't know if it's because of the diploma year or if they don't need it anymore. But no, there is no one that checks and helps.

Interview 11

Background Information

First, I would like to start asking you a few questions about your school and your background. This is for me to get a better idea of you as an internationally-minded student.

Question	Answer
Grade level / age group <i>What grade are you in? How old are you?</i>	Year 12, 17 years old
Curriculum at school <i>What curricula or academic programs does your school offer? (Besides the IB).</i>	IB
Language of instruction at school <i>What is the language of instruction at your school? Are there any other languages used (besides in foreign language classes)?</i>	English
Number of students <i>How many students are enrolled in your school?</i>	Approximately 1,500
Number of faculty members <i>How many faculty members does your school employ?</i>	Approximately 300
Other staff members <i>How many other staff members does your school employ? For example: any kind of teaching support staff, IT, maintenance, security, kitchen staff etc.</i>	Teaching assistants, maids, gardeners, kitchen
Facilities & Equipment <i>What kind of facilities does your school offer? What kind of equipment is available at your school and in the classrooms? (e.g. projector, laptops, tablets etc)</i>	Support center (rooms for individual learning support), science lab, technology labs, music floor (recording studio, sound lab), art room, dark room (to develop photos)
Other information about the school (certain programs offered, specializations, school environment etc) <i>Is there anything else you can tell me about your school? Does your school offer any additional programs? Are there any specializations? What is your school environment like? What is it that makes your school unique or different from other schools you have been to?</i>	Student has only been at this school since she was 3 years old; school caters towards the students (e.g. school organizes additional classes if there are enough students who organize and sign a petition for it; self-study online courses, lots of choices)

Experience at school <i>How long have you been attending this school?</i>	14 years
Subjects <i>What subjects are you taking this year (at SL or HL)?</i>	HL: psychology, English A language & literature, biology SL: Thai, math studies, music
Favorite subject/class <i>What is your favorite subject or class and why?</i>	Psychology and biology; great and funny science teachers;
Least favorite subject/class <i>What is your least favorite subject or class and why?</i>	Thai (essay writing is difficult); CAS (too many reflections, does not see the value in it);
Satisfaction with school <i>Are you generally happy with the school you are currently attending? Why or why not?</i>	Yes, very
Gender <i>male / female / other</i>	female

Learner autonomy

The overall research question of my topic is: “How can learner autonomy be fostered at IB schools?”. If you don’t know the term “learner autonomy”, you might be familiar with similar concepts such as “self-directed learning”, “independent learning”, or “self-regulation”.

*I will ask you a few questions about learner autonomy in relation to your school and the curriculum – **the International Baccalaureate program** – it offers.*

- First of all, have you ever heard of the term “learner autonomy” or any of its related concepts: “self-directed learning”, “independent learning”, or “self-regulation”?
 - [if YES]: Can you try to explain in your own words what learning autonomously means and what kind of characteristics an autonomous learner should have?
 - [if NO → move on to next question]

Well, I think I know what the other words mean. I’ve never heard of ‘learner autonomy’, but I think I know what it means. But I’ve never heard that specific term.

So what do you think does it mean?

Like, how you have to ... sort of keep up with yourself. The teachers are not always gonna be on your back about it. You have to self-sufficient in the work that you do at home, most importantly, and during free times at school.

- I will give you now a short questionnaire that contains characteristics often associated with autonomous learners. This will also give you better idea of what is meant by “learner autonomy”. Please take a moment to read through each of the questions and try to evaluate how good you think you are at these things.
[hand over questionnaire]

I can...	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
determine realistic and reachable goals for school		X		
select appropriate methods and techniques to study and complete work effectively		X		
monitor my own learning		X		
evaluate the progress of my own learning		X		
I...	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
get actively involved in social aspects of learning (e.g. group or pair work, discussions, collaborating/working together)		X		
interpret new information in a way that activates my prior knowledge of the subject		X		
am intrinsically motivated			X	
am in control of my own decision-making		X		
take responsibility for the outcomes of my actions		X		
have confidence in myself when it comes to my school work			X	

- Thank you for taking your time. [take questionnaire and look at it so that the participant can also see].
Now I want you to look at your answers and think about your reasoning. Why do you think that this [point at Strongly Agree and Agree items] is something you are good at or you generally do? And why do you think is this [point at Disagree and Strongly Disagree items] something you are not good at or you generally do not do?
 - [eliciting more specific information] Can you come up with an example or situation for that? [not asked]
 - [Discuss questionnaire with participant, make sure participant can see questionnaire the entire time and refer to it]

*So, for the intrinsically motivated, I feel I am not very good at self-study unless I am around people to do it. So, I have to be around people to do it. For example, before I would always go home and watch TV series until 6:30, then I would eat dinner, then I would take a shower, and then I would start my homework at eight. And back then I had to go to sleep at nine. So, I had that one hour to do my work. But then, you know, I would still procrastinate a little... But then, now, *censored*[name of friend], she is very like ... she will do the work. She will come home, and from three to five she will do the work, no procrastination, which boggles my mind, then she will go to the gym. Ah, I hate the gym. But then she will go to the gym, like she is very self-sufficient. So every time I would need work to get done, I would go to her house and be like, 'Hello, I am here'. And the I will*

do the work. You know, because then I am here and I would be interrupting her. So, that's how I would do it. But, at school it kinda depends on how near the deadline is. I am a huge procrastinator. So, it's kind the little things. It's just like, like social influence that will make me want to do it. For this one (points at "have confidence in myself when it comes to my school work"), a lot of the time, especially for psychology, I would go 'Ohhh, I have these notes, but I don't think they are correct. Can I like compare with your notes? Do you want to study together?'. Like, I don't have confidence in what I have and that's because in the MYP system ... because You know, in the MYP system you have to do everything and I don't like everything. Like, I don't like physics, I don't like chem, I don't like math, so I would always get lower grades in that. And I think that always sort of built the mindset that, you know, the notes that I do have are not working. But, that's changing a bit in my bio. But, I do pretty good now. Yea.

Good. You were a bit hesitant when you looked at "get actively involved in social aspects of learning". So, why were you thinking about that one?

I like working alone, but if you ask me to work in pairs, in groups and stuff, I can do it. I can work with anybody, I can talk to anybody. But, personally, I would like to do my things on my own or with the people that I trust with school work related stuff. I was sort of debating 'Does he mean when I have to? Or does he mean like, if I want to?'

Learner profiles

- Here is a list of **IB learner profiles** [hand official IB document with page of learner profiles]. Take a look at those learner profiles and the list of characteristics of autonomous learners [point at questionnaire]. Which of these 10 attributes – if any - do you think are representative of promoting learner autonomy?
 - You may choose as many or as few as you want.
 - If you think that all of them or none of them represent learner autonomy, that is also fine. [not asked]
 - Can you explain why you think this attribute is representative / not representative of learner autonomy? [not asked]

I think, the four main ones that I think are: inquirers, principled, balanced, and reflective. Inquirers, first of, because you are motivated to want to know more. You don't stop the knowledge after the class ends and you don't start it when the class begins. You continuously think about it. That's why I don't think 'knowledgeable' because sometimes 'knowledgeable' just means you have the knowledge, but that's not it. You actively go find more, which I think motivates some people to continue the work at home, to understand more, you know. 'Principles' because they just need to stay on task. I think 'principled' also connects to procrastination. Procrastinators are not principled as much (laughs). Uhm ... 'balanced' because, you know, you are balancing everything. You know, you find the time for the work, for family life, friends, and reflective because you need to think back. You are always reflecting, but you need to think back to know that uhm to know what I need to do to become successful.

Okay, and which of these [points at learner profiles] do you think do not correspond to those here [points at learner characteristics handout]?

I don't think 'caring' has anything to do how you study because it's self-study, you know. I think 'open-minded' ... when I think of 'open-minded' it's normally two

words: 'other people', anything like people-oriented. Maybe this one as well [points at 'communicators'] ...cause you don't really need to talk unless you study together. But then, that's still ... it's not self-study I think.

Teachers

- Now I would like to talk to you about your teachers and the way they teach. When you look at the items of the questionnaire, can you think of a teacher who you believe is particularly eager to promote these qualities in his or her students? You do not need to mention his or her name.
 - If NO: Can you maybe think of teachers who you believe attempt to promote at least one of those qualities in their students?
 - If YES: What are some ways in which he or she promotes these qualities? Can you think of a concrete example or a situation in which he or she has promoted these qualities?
 - What kind of materials does/did he or she use for that? (e.g. handouts, graphic organizers, posted links on the school's learning platform, videos, classroom displays, stories, other resources or ways of teaching)

(long pause) I don't think any of my teachers ... I think a lot of my teachers do the tactic of ... here is the information for the exams what you need to know. It's your choice or not to do it at home. If you do, there is a higher chance of you being successful. If you don't, you are probably not going to do so well on the exams, on the tests. But, you know, that's what you decide to do with your time, but I am always here if you need help. I think that's what they are trying to instill because we don't have a lot of homework. The only homework that they give us is either worksheets from home and if you want to complete them you do them at home. But they don't check it and stuff. Like, you start an essay in class and you take it home to finish it. Here is the deadline, sort of thing. So, you do whatever you want with your time, but just know, this is the deadline, these are exams and what we expect sort of thing.

Can you think of any specific items here where you think, 'Okay, here is a teacher who really tries to foster these qualities, or this specific quality'.

(long pause). This one [points at "interpret new information in a way that activates my prior knowledge of the subject"]. I think relates to science because you know everything is connected. He like to say, 'I'm not gonna teach you in categories'. Cause you know, in psychology it's kind of easier to teach in categories because there is the biological, cognitive, social categories with studies and then you answer the questions. That's pretty much how the exams are. But then with biology it's ... everything is connected. Like right now we are doing human physiology and every time there is something ... for example, we were learning about how to digest carbohydrates ... our very first unit was the structure of carbohydrates and all that, you know, the kind of boring stuff. But then now he goes, 'Now you can connect it back and you know why this carbohydrate can be digested easier than this because of the bonds'. And he just connects all of it together. Like, we go through the topics, but it's very interwoven.

Anything else you can think of? Or is that it?

Hm.. (long pause). Also, in biology, he ... even though he won't give you homework and it's sort of self-study, sometimes he will do like mini pop stuff. Not with papers but he will go like, 'Get a whiteboard and draw the digestive system'. And it's sort of like, 'I don't know any of this and he going to know oh my god' (laughs). But, I think that's it. ... With music, it's like, read it, and then like regurgitate the information. But he is not as strict because he still has the information on the board. So, pretty much, he is like, 'Oh and what else?' and you are like reading it walablalabla

Differentiation

- In most classrooms, you usually have students who are a bit better than the rest, some who struggle a bit more with the subject than the rest, and then there are some who are something in-between and are neither particularly good or bad in the subject. How well do you think do your teachers deal with such mixed-ability groups? In other words, in what ways do you think do your teachers differentiate among students in their classroom?
 - What kind of materials does/did he or she use for that? (e.g. handouts, graphic organizers, posted links on the school's learning platform, videos, classroom displays, stories, other resources or ways of teaching)
[not asked]

*I think ... with them everyone starts with a clean slate. So, you ... and I think they try to continue that clean slate. So whenever a person is struggling then they will give more support to that person. But what I like to say is, you know, even though I am not good at math, I am good at something else. Like, something not school related (laughs). You know, if they would just grade me on how good I could talk, I would get an A. But, I think, some teachers develop that sort of mindset as well because they know that school is mandatory and you need to know the stuff. Yea ... I have seen some bias, but not in DP, in MYP. Because I know I'm not really good in math so I take no offence to it, but some people were really upset. So there was like common knowledge, there would be like classes A, B, C, D, E. Uhm ... B-C would have math at the same time and A-D-E would have math at the same time. It was known that this was because B-C had the stronger math students and A-D-E didn't. So then, it was kind of like, 'oh we come here together as this class because you are just gonna do this kind of math' and some of the students also took on this mindset even though the same teachers were teaching both of those classes and we were being taught the same stuff. The people in B-C would sometimes be like, 'Oh, why would I be in this class... baaaah'. So, yea... But now I think it's more, like... I was talking to *censored*[friend's name] about this and I was like 'You know, now in DP you don't really need to compare your grades to other people because it's depending on what university you want to go to and what their requirements are'. So for example, I want to go to university in New Zealand and their requirements are not as high as in Cambridge. My grades are good for what I want to go to and I am at about a 34 or 35. But other people that are 40 ... and ... that's good for them because they want to go to this university. So, that's how I think it is nowadays.*

ICT

- To what extent do you believe that access to the internet, a computer, and other electronic devices can help you become a more autonomous learner?
 - Do you believe that if you had not the possibility to use information and communication technology for school you would be less autonomous in your learning?

I don't think so. Because the schools that don't have electronics, computers and stuff at school, they are still able to study at home. They just use textbooks. And I think a computer is just another form of textbooks. I mean, obviously there are many ups and downs with technology and there is this whole debate about it, but because we feel comfortable with it, it could help us as well. And also, the use of technology can help you procrastinate more, I feel ... as I have experienced myself (laughs). But also, my Thai teacher, she would tell us about procrastinating all the time by going out with her friends, so I think, it's the same. It's just another form of learning and it's sort of your choice what you do with that time and how you use it. (long pause) I mean, it could help when you are out. Like, I can't carry around my textbook all the time so my psychology teacher sent me a link to the scanned textbooks. So when I am here [at the shopping mall], I could study here even though I don't have my textbook with me. I think that's where I find the most help. Just the sources. The unlimited sources. That just makes the studying less of a hassle and sometimes I like visual stuff ... so in biology I look for animation which in textbooks, unless you are in Harry Potter, you don't have animations.

- To what extent do your teachers use information and communication technology in their classroom to promote learner autonomy (i.e. help you learn more independently)?

All the time. In biology, everything is on a page. Here is the scanned textbook, here is the animations we used in class. If you need any information from your teacher it will pop up in Google Classroom. So it will pop up in your email as well, any urgent information. In psychology, we search for studies. But we also use the printed copies. We have unlimited notes, you can share your notes with other people. Uhm... Thai ... she likes to project it on the board with the notes and then she will screenshot it and send it to our Facebook group. Music ... everything is on the computer cause there is this website that we use for all IB music stuff ... so it's easy access. English ... you type your essays ... you get to Read a bunch of different stuff. I think math is the only ... paper ... wise ... except all the answers are on the computer.

Freedom

- To what extent do you think it is important for teachers to provide choices of different tasks to promote learner autonomy (i.e. help you learn more independently)? Do you think that if a teacher provides a variety of choices it helps students become more autonomous in their learning?

*Yes, because my dad always goes, 'You know *censored*[name of student], uhm... in university your professors are not gonna chase your behind if you don't*

have stuff on time, they are just gonna give you a zero". So I am like, 'okay'. So, in MYP it was structured because this is what you needed to know because you need to know the basis of the school. Now that you come in DP, you learn how to do stuff on your own. You don't always need somebody there as a support because sometimes it's okay if you fall if you learn from your mistakes. So under freedom I have learned about my limits and what I am able to do and then you can just apply that to everyday life. I think that's what they are doing or trying to do by giving us free periods. Like, 'Look, we are giving you this time to do whatever you want, just know that you have stuff to do and that you need to be organized. But we are not gonna restrict you'. So some people only do work because they feel that there is a teacher here and if they don't do anything they will see they are not doing any work. And if that's the way you work, well then that's okay. But I think it's just more about the organization and the knowledge of how you organize yourself. Because you just get more freedom as you grow older and freedom is hard, you know. You can do anything with it.

What about assignments? Do you teachers sometimes give you a certain amount of freedom when they give you assignments?

*Sometimes, if they book something and we have a lot of assignments that week, we just tell the teachers, 'Look, we are just cramped ... this day and this week ... is it possible if we move it to another week?' Sometimes the teachers will say yes, sometimes no. Sometimes with specific teachers when you come before the deadline, like a few days before, they don't like it if you come right before the deadline ... so if you go, 'Look, none of us can manage, can we get an extension?'. Some teachers are flexible with that, some teachers are like, 'No, you need to organize your time better'. But I feel like at *censored*[name of school] MYP there is a lot of 'Can I get extension on this and on that'. Ahh. I just hate that. It's your job, it's not the teacher's fault. You have time for everything if you plan for everything. Like, that's what I learned in DP.*

- Do your teachers normally give you a variety of tasks to choose from? Or can you think of a teacher who usually provides a range of choices? Again, there is no need to mention the name of that teacher. [not asked]
 - What kind of tasks and in what situations? [not asked]
 - Why do you think they do that? [not asked]

Language

As the language of instruction at this school is English, a language that is different from most students' first language, I would like to ask you a few questions about that.

- In how far do you think does being taught in English influence your learning?
 - Do you think it would be much different if everything was taught in your native language? Why or why not? [not asked because student is English native speaker]

- Do you think it would be much easier for you? Would it have a huge impact on your grades?
[not asked because student is English native speaker]

That sounds like such a TOK question. (laughs) Like-

(laughs) How can you know? How-

Like is your view of the world different because of (laughs). Uhm ... well, I don't know. English is all I know. But I like English because it's my mother tongue. Even though I learned Thai around the same time as I learned English, my Thai is much weaker than my English is because ... you know, the school is in English.

Okay, how about other students at school whose English is not as good?

Yea, well, being an international school, they understand that and they give ... like alternatives. So, there is obviously the higher level and standard level. But there is also other things like in the MYP Language B ... So if you are not ready to join the normal curriculum, you can always join the curriculum that will help build your English.

- To what extent do your subject teachers, i.e. any teacher who is not teaching you a language, pay attention to language aspects
 - in the classroom?
 - outside of the classroom / in homework assignments?

I think the only time they would pay attention is when you ask them 'Can you clarify dadadadada this and that'. But I don't think that they look at it as a language aspect but more of a topic knowledge aspect. I never thought about it that way.

So, if you write an essay in psychology or biology or something. Do they pay attention to the language?

Oh... it depends on the teacher. My psychology teacher used to be an English teacher. So, sometimes she will be like, 'Yea you know, I like it if your English is well thought out, but this is psychology, so I don't really care'. You know ... If you have the information, then you are still gonna get the points. Same with biology. If your English sucks but you have the key words then it doesn't really matter. The only place where it matters is in the languages class.

- Can you think of any resources your teachers use in order to help you or other students with the language barrier?
(e.g. handouts, graphic organizers, posted links on the school's learning platform, videos, classroom displays, stories, other resources or ways of teaching)

They just say that if you have any struggles you should just come to the learning support. But it's sort of the student's responsibility. So the teachers themselves, they don't really do much ... Unless you are an English teacher, but ... like normally ... if you are an English teacher and you find your students struggling, then you just move your students down levels. Like, at the same time I get it. But on the other side, it's kind of ... emotionally ... like ... it's kind of a little bit

embarrassing. Like, if I was in that position and then the teacher is like, 'Hey, you know, your English kind of sucks'. It's like ... well ... there is nothing I can do about it, you know. It's not my fault ... but ... you know.

Learner Autonomy Definitions

The table below is an overview of all definitions on learner autonomy provided by the participants in the interview after being asked the following question:

- First of all, have you ever heard of the term “learner autonomy” or any of its related concepts: “self-directed learning”, “independent learning”, or “self-regulation”?
 - Can you try to explain in your own words what learning autonomously means and what kind of characteristics an autonomous learner should have?

Interview	Definition
1	<i>Yea, it's probably with learning where the student has most control and control over planning and carrying out all the actions related to studying and... yea... yea pretty much. And characteristics...they should probably have a lot of self-control, coherency, self-sustainment... what else.... concentration, a lot of concentration and being self-critical is very important I think. Yea... those are the main traits I think.</i>
2	<i>I guess well first of all a good example of it would be probably like not giving the fish but teaching people to fish. Perhaps that would be one idea. So that, like, I find self-directed learning is not only learning the content from the subject but also... deepening your understanding and even developing your skills to learn in general so I guess, self-directed learning is not something that you just simply listen to class... sit and listen in class and... remember what the teacher says but perhaps for instance, I don't know develop your understandings from it or even like... when you're working independently you don't... only do the homework but you actually try to understand something. It's I guess a good example of self-directed learning. That's what it means to me because I hate to just remember the topics. I can't do it personally. So it's quite crucial for me.</i>

3	<p><i>So basically, autonomy is a kind of structure, a base... like if you have a concept and you divide into many smaller groups or ways, that's for example how I would define it. So basically, it's a learning way... showed in a... how can you learn in different ways, or what are the ways of learning. Something like that.</i></p>
4	<p><i>Self study. Normally if I'm having a hard time with a teacher and they're not teaching very well, I would have to teach myself. That for me would be learning independently. To a lower extent I would say when for example ... I'm a boarding student so I'm here alone and I don't have anyone checking up if I'm doing homework, studies of whatever. I don't have my parents doing that so I have to take that under my own supervision and doing that on myself.</i></p>
5	<p><i>Yes. I believe it's when an institution gives its students the opportunity to self study, to decide what the student or pupil would like to learn themselves and the methods through which the student can achieve this</i></p>
6	<p><i>I think learner autonomy is the ability to ... learn both at your own pace ... and with your own order. So, that is something ... I feel like you should be allowed to spend more time on some things and less time on other things. While, you know, if you following you teacher's curriculum, you have a set time for everything. That's what I like about learner autonomy. On the other hand, I feel like, the most important part for me is you get to do things your own way. So, history class, the way my teacher teaches it is very topic oriented. We are doing Chinese history right now and we focus on various topics around that. So and to me it doesn't make sense like that. It is not a way I can learn history because I need it in a chronological order. So learner autonomy helps me with that because I get to google things myself, read the Powerpoints the teacher makes, but put them into the correct order in my mind to make sense of it.</i></p>
7	<p><i>Yes. I would say that self-directed learning at our school is guided through the teacher who guide you. They provide more resources, in the classroom you can be more independent in terms of what you want to learn today. You can choose different parts of the curriculum.</i></p>

8	<i>So I feel that in independent learning you get guided in a direction, but within that direction you have to understand what you are learning yourself and how you learn it so you can learn most efficiently.</i>
9	<i>I've heard the word 'autonomy' in my business course I took. It was about motivation ... like kind of related to skills... maybe in that sense.</i>
10	<i>Yes, I have heard of them. Sometimes, in class, we get time where the teacher is teaching us ... like in biology, instead of the teacher standing there and telling us, he tells us to go get the textbooks out and find it out ourselves and then we discuss it and find it out as a class.</i>
11	<i>Like, how you have to ... sort of keep up with yourself. The teachers are not always gonna be on your back about it. You have to self-sufficient in the work that you do at home, most importantly, and during free times at school.</i>

Learner Profiles Handout

The following handout was shown to students during the interview.



The graphic features a silhouette of a person's head in profile, facing right. Inside the silhouette, various attributes of the IB learner profile are listed in a word cloud style, including: INQUIRERS, KNOWLEDGEABLE, OPEN-MINDED, PRINCIPLED, RISK-TAKERS, BALANCED, REFLECTIVE, COMMUNICATORS, THINKERS, and CARING. To the right of the silhouette is a circular logo with the text 'THE IB LEARNER PROFILE' around the perimeter and a smaller silhouette of a person's head in the center.

IB learner profile

The aim of all IB programmes is to develop internationally minded people who, recognizing their common humanity and shared guardianship of the planet, help to create a better and more peaceful world.

As IB learners we strive to be:

INQUIRERS We nurture our curiosity, developing skills for inquiry and research. We know how to learn independently and with others. We learn with enthusiasm and sustain our love of learning throughout life.	OPEN-MINDED We critically appreciate our own cultures and personal histories, as well as the values and traditions of others. We seek and evaluate a range of points of view, and we are willing to grow from the experience.
KNOWLEDGEABLE We develop and use conceptual understanding, exploring knowledge across a range of disciplines. We engage with issues and ideas that have local and global significance.	CARING We show empathy, compassion and respect. We have a commitment to service, and we act to make a positive difference in the lives of others and in the world around us.
THINKERS We use critical and creative thinking skills to analyse and take responsible action on complex problems. We exercise initiative in making reasoned, ethical decisions.	RISK-TAKERS We approach uncertainty with forethought and determination; we work independently and cooperatively to explore new ideas and innovative strategies. We are resourceful and resilient in the face of challenges and change.
COMMUNICATORS We express ourselves confidently and creatively in more than one language and in many ways. We collaborate effectively, listening carefully to the perspectives of other individuals and groups.	BALANCED We understand the importance of balancing different aspects of our lives—intellectual, physical, and emotional—to achieve well-being for ourselves and others. We recognize our interdependence with other people and with the world in which we live.
PRINCIPLED We act with integrity and honesty, with a strong sense of fairness and justice, and with respect for the dignity and rights of people everywhere. We take responsibility for our actions and their consequences.	REFLECTIVE We thoughtfully consider the world and our own ideas and experience. We work to understand our strengths and weaknesses in order to support our learning and personal development.

The IB learner profile represents 10 attributes valued by IB World Schools. We believe these attributes, and others like them, can help individuals and groups become responsible members of local, national and global communities.

International Baccalaureate®
Baccalauréat International®
Bachillerato Internacional®

© International Baccalaureate Organization 2013
International Baccalaureate® | Baccalauréat International® | Bachillerato Internacional®

(This page can be found in any subject guide on the OCC as well as in several course books that have been designed for the IB)

RESOURCES

Understanding by Design® Sample Lesson Plan

Understanding by Design		Intro	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	resources	template
Stage 1 – Desired Results							
“after” backward design	Established Goal(s): GA SS4H6 The student will explain westward expansion of America between 1801 and 1861. a. describe territorial expansion with emphasis on the Louisiana Purchase, the Lewis & Clark expedition, and the acquisitions of Texas (the Alamo and independence), Oregon (Oregon Trail), and California (Gold Rush and the development of mining towns) b. describe the impact of life in America. G						
	Understanding(s): U <i>Students will understand that...</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many pioneers had naive ideas about the opportunities and difficulties of moving West. People move for a variety of reasons -- for new economic opportunities, greater freedoms or to flee something. Successful pioneers rely on courage, ingenuity, and collaboration to overcome hardships and challenges. 			Essential Question(s) Q <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Why do people move? Why did the pioneers leave their homes to head west? How do geography and topography affect travel and settlement? Why did some pioneers survive and prosper while others did not? What is a pioneer? What is “pioneer spirit”? What was pioneer life <u>really</u> like? 			
	Students will know... K <ul style="list-style-type: none"> key facts about the westward movement and pioneer life on the prairie pioneer vocabulary terms basic geography (i.e., the travel routes of pioneers and location of their settlements) 			Students will be able to... S <ul style="list-style-type: none"> recognize, define, and use pioneer vocabulary in context use research skills (with guidance) to find out about life on the wagon train and prairie express their findings orally and in writing 			
	Stage 2 – Assessment Evidence						
Performance Task(s): T <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a museum display, including artifacts, pictures, and diary entries, depicting “a week in the life” of a family of settlers living on the prairie. (What common misunderstandings do folks today have about prairie life and westward settlement?) Write 1 letter a day (each representing a month of travel) to a friend “back east” describing your life on the wagon train and the prairie. Tell about your hopes and dreams, then explain what life on the frontier was really like. (Students may also draw pictures and explain orally.) 				Other Evidence: OE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> oral and/or written response to one of the Essential Questions drawing(s) showing hardships of pioneer life test on facts about westward expansion, life on the prairie, and basic geography explanation of the “memory box” contents 			
Stage 3 – Learning Plan							
Learning Activities: (selected) L <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use K-W-L to assess students’ prior knowledge and identify learning goals for the unit. Revise Prairie Day activities (e.g., substitute Oregon Trail 2 computer simulation for “dress the pioneer” and ask for journal entries while the simulation is played). Include other fictional readings linked to the identified content standards/understandings (e.g., Little House on the Prairie, Butter in the Well). Create a “timeline map” of a pioneer family’s journey west. Add non-fiction sources to accommodate various reading levels, such as Life on the Oregon Trail, Diaries of Pioneer Women, and Dakota Dugout. Guide students in researching the period using a variety of resources. Review the scoring rubrics for “memory box,” museum display, letters, and journals before students begin the performance tasks. Include opportunities for students to study examples of these products. 							

©2003 ASCD and Grant Wiggins & Jay McTighe page 4

Source:

Authentic Education. 2015. *Understanding by Design: Overview of UbD & the design template*. <http://www.grantwiggins.org/documents/UbDQuikvue1005.pdf>. (25 May 2017).

ABSTRACT

Learner autonomy is a concept that has not received much attention at IB World Schools so far. Fostering autonomous learners in a setting where most students' first language is different from that of the language of instruction can be a challenging endeavor. This study investigates to what extent learner autonomy is fostered at IB schools and how this is achieved. A total of 15 participants participated in the study. Semi-structured interviews were conducted and analyzed. The analysis provides a list of ways to foster autonomy at IB World Schools and points to possible challenges in that process. The results of the interviews show that fostering autonomy is done to a large extent at IB World Schools and that students are very much aware of it. Most students do not consider the language component to be a major barrier for fostering autonomous learners.

Lerner Autonomie ein Konzept das bisher wenig Aufmerksamkeit an IB World Schools erfuhr. Das Fördern von autonomen Lernenden in einem Setting wo die meisten SchülerInnen eine andere Erstsprache besitzen als die Unterrichtssprache kann ein herausforderndes Begeben darstellen. Diese Studie untersucht das Ausmaß in dem Lerner Autonomie an IB World Schools gefördert wird und wie dieses Ziel erreicht wird. Insgesamt nahmen 15 TeilnehmerInnen an der Studie teil. Semi-strukturierte Interviews wurden durchgeführt und analysiert. Die Analyse liefert eine Liste an Möglichkeiten um Lerner Autonomie an IB World Schools zu fördern und weist auf mögliche Herausforderungen hin die während diesem Prozess auftreten können. Die Resultate der Interviews zeigen, dass Lerner Autonomie in einem großen Ausmaß an IB World Schools gefördert wird und dass SchülerInnen durchaus sich darüber bewusst sind. Die meisten SchülerInnen betrachteten die Sprachkomponente als keine bedeutende Barriere um autonome Lernenden zu fördern.