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Education and Reform to reach autonomous learners: Between  
Reality and Myth

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**Abstract**

In this paper, we questioned whether a link exists between: education, reform and learner autonomy. We aim at raising awareness about why do educational reforms seem to fail when put into practice, taking the Algerian LMD<sup>1</sup> reform as a case. We used online journals to collect qualitative data from twelve advanced EFL students (Master I and Master II). Through the six open-ended items, we employed a thematic analysis of the content. Results showed that most of the participants still find educational reforms non suitable and do not reflect administrative practices. Autonomy in our learners is still unachieved although the reform highlights it. We ended the work with a trial to suggest elements that make up the concept of reform from our own conception.

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**1. Introduction**

We prefer to start our perspective here by approaching the concepts of interest for our reflection's content. Let us consider the key term; education. The word education is omnipresent and penetrating in human life. We can assume that all countries of all over the world face a gigantic problem in the educational systems at all levels. We are often acquainted to the expression reform of education and making change, and create autonomy in our learners. In this reflection, our aim is to question whether a link really exists between these three key concepts or it is just a myth? What change do we notice? We believe no profound change really seems relevant to any real situation; change is only a matter of official documents, but we mean is there any perceived change in practice? When talking of reform, we feel we can guarantee a better education for our children. However, whenever governments launch educational transformations, we find people complaining, rejecting. Riots, strikes, press talks, debates are still part of our routine. We often listen to generations say; our education was much better than this new one. As a higher education teacher and researcher, we are also experiencing the LMD system as a reform. These above sources inspired us to get engaged in this issue and start this project with advanced English as Foreign Language (EFL) students who studied under this system.

Algeria has been engaged in a series of reforms at all educational levels. It is not new in a world of globalization. A great many of countries around the world try to introduce educational reforms to respond to the needs dictated by the fast changes in the socio-economic world. Let us exemplify with the USA and Canada that knew important reforms right from the 1980's. In this, we can quote Waks (2007: 277):

*Since the early 1980s, when a flood of educational reforms swept over the United States after publication of A Nation at Risk in 1983, and similar reforms were undertaken in Canada and other industrial countries, a distinct subfield devoted to educational change has emerged within educational studies.*

As one might notice, the role of research and publication remains salient and an inevitable tool to make change. Waks in his article insisted on this aspect of change. He also went through the stages of the development of reforms along the last three decades where change seems to happen gradually. In the 1990s, the point he highlighted at this

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<sup>1</sup> Licence/Master/Doctorat

epoch of reforms as making things practical. In other words, there was no direct link between theoretical documents drafted about the reform and its application. This point is similarly highlighted in our reflection.

## **2. An Overview about Education, Reform and Learner Autonomy**

To begin with, we have been the result of what we call now the traditional system in Algeria. In 2005, a new system called the LMD system was introduced in this same country. We have started conducting research on this system's strengths and weaknesses right from its piloting stage. We have also made it clear that all these strong newly adopted points in it have been theoretical and these are its said shortcomings. In our previous works on the LMD reform (c.f. Idri: 2009, Idri: 2011a), we tried to identify the system and make evaluations all along its progress in the Algerian context. Education, reform and learner autonomy have been also highlighted in these works.

Before ever treating the data we gathered from our participants, we shall first treat our three concepts. Let us start by the concept of education. When approaching the term from its linguistic meaning, we can say that to educate is to give intellectual, moral and social instruction mainly in a university environment. Yet, originally, the term "education" (from Latin: e-ducere) and that means **to lead out**<sup>2</sup> indicates properly: "leading out or drawing out the latent powers of an individual" (Cassel Encyclopedic Dictionary, 1904- Vol. III)<sup>3</sup>. This definition leads us towards the core of the discipline. It is accepted in the recent educational approaches that education has the individual as a subject. This individual is the most important factor of this discipline upon which all turn. This salient individual is the Student.

Relying on the original definition we stated at the start, to educate is meant to sort out the student's hidden abilities. That is, the student should be seen as an individual with latent, implied, indirect, inferable, understood, unspoken, tacit, inherent, intrinsic, innate, natural, inferential capabilities referred to as power in the above definition. Our point here is that our teaching should or must be based on this student as an individual, as a human who is believed to possess some prerequisites; he/she is able to do, able to achieve, able to think, able to change, and, hence, autonomous. This view can be linked to Waks' (2007: 277) claimed that educational change should be at the institutional level rather than the organizational and this is what our discussion on administrative practices highlights.

If we approach the student from this angle, the student's place in education is also to change and he/she will eventually be the core factor and actor in any educational system. All instruction then should turn around the student and his/her needs. Back to the definition, and we shall take its second part. When the original definition of education uses the word power, we can relate this to the student's talent, ability, gift, faculty, flair, genius, facility, aptitude, capacity, knack, ingenuity, forte, strength; endowment. All these are precious faculties we need to emphasize in the learner. We believe this what should education be, especially that educators concentrate now on learner-centeredness, on learners' needs, learners' capability for self-access learning. From here, many teaching approaches and methods exist, just to defend the students' affective well being and psychological equilibrium. Let us cite Suggestopedia (See Humanistic Approach; an approach to learning based on psychological principles of the power of suggestion, Fleming, 1969), Natural Approach (developed by Krashen and Terrell, 1983 that takes affect into consideration in a prominent way), Community Language Learning (An approach to language teaching based on principles of psychological counseling, Malamah-Thomas, 1999: g145). Why does research put focus on affect? All is based on the learners' psychological, emotional and affective well-being and this is primarily the role of the instructor as part of his/her accompaniment to lead learners towards a more self-directed learning. According to the humanistic approach components, there are five hypotheses related to education: feelings, social relations, responsibility, intellect and self-actualization (Stevick, 1990: 23-4).

From these points, we can assert that when we educate, we not only teach, train, instruct, inform, indoctrinate, but we also tutor, enlighten, coach, prepare. Yes, we prepare a whole generation for not only a profession, but for social life, for leadership, governance and autonomy. We educate to make people ready to take responsibility; it is undoubtedly any authority's responsibility to educate the people who will take the lead later on. That is what reform should embed.

Let us now consider what reform should look like as we conceive the issue. Reform is generally linked to change. Reform implies improvement, betterment, amelioration, melioration, emendation, rectification, correction, rehabilitation, change, modification, perestroika, reorganization, renovation, recovery. All these are a matter of repairing something we believe to be wrong, or has something wrong somewhere. All governments think of reform

<sup>2</sup> <http://motherlode.org.uk/educere>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.polyarchy.org/education.html>

in education. This denotes their awareness of the inconsistencies they have in their educational systems. Hence, the aim behind is always to improve, rectify, correct, mend, repair, fix, remedy, redo, revise, revolutionize, etc.

As afore stated, we aim through this paper to link the essence of education to reform and draw a conclusion whether the LMD Algerian reform could foster autonomy in our learners or not. We are still questioning the effectiveness of this system after years of research and evaluations already done. For instance, Idri (2011a) concluded in her paper:

*Yet, one cannot deny that employing what the LMD system suggests remains impossible. Our experience has shown that these theoretical bases the LMD system presents and which seem to be perfect cannot be present in our universities because of a wide number of reasons. These grounds are related to the unawareness of the system itself by its users, to the limited tools and means together with their employment, to the specialized teachers, to the number of full-time teachers, etc. For a better success, time and effort are needed to make of it a success in our country.*

It is, in fact, a reform like any other one that took place in other nations. In the USA, for instance, many events took place in the 1960s and 1980s that changed the legal relationship between institutions and students (Szablewicz & Gibbs: 1987). The historical evolution of this college/university-student relationship has been detailed by Brian (1991) and the revolution students held made this link change. That why; we believe that in our context, our reform is still in its embryonic stage. When taking the positive position we have on the system, we realized from the official documents we read that the aim behind changing the system of teaching in our educational structure at the higher education level is to create an overall innovation within the Algerian universities to permit them follow the flow of real foundations adequate with the evolution of not only scientific research and educational techniques, but the world as well. This is, of course, a prominent matter because we are in need of the tools to speak the same language in similar fields, to use the same vocabulary and terminology with other nations, to use the same evaluation methods for the sake of developing a universal education. Yet, do these elements occur in our LMD reform? Are we speaking this same language?

When considering modern ways of education, we can in no sense deny its development trough time. Let us go back about three hundred years; the theory that subjugated the philosophy about higher education was in loco parentis; “in the place of parents” (Szablewicz & Gibbs: 1987). In their work, they sketched the evolution of reform and the change of college-student relationship. This doctrine, as the authors pictured it was dead in the 1960s when students reacted against the Vietnam war and asked for more freedom and equality. This term refers to academies performing on behalf of parents for the benefit of their students. Where is the student’s view and identity here? Where is his/her place? It is true that students were considered children in the seventeenth-century. We believe now things changed and should change further. All should turn around the students; the content, the teaching method to be adopted, the materials to be used, the respect of their learning needs and styles as well as of their being a complete, valuable individual who can do, can change, can modify, can design, can be autonomous. We tend to treat this issue repeatedly because we consider that making all the reform, which is grounded on theoretical documents, practical in our higher education settings. Learners’ autonomy now is invading scholars’ time and systems’ amendments, but we still find our learners spoon-fed, unable to make decisions, seeking ready-made works; when invited to take part, they often withdraw, Why? That is a debatable issue.

In fact, the idea is not novel as many psychologists and educators have focused on the issue. A good case in point is Chickering's Psychosocial Model; one of the most extensively recognized, acknowledged, well-known and applied theory of student development. Arthur Chickering's Psychosocial Model was based on Eric Erikson's Identity vs. Identity Confusion Stage of Development. This model is based on seven vectors of development which are: Developing Competence, Managing Emotions, Developing Autonomy, Establishing Identity, Freeing Interpersonal Relationships, Developing Purpose, Developing Integrity<sup>4</sup>. This model has been adopted in the USA in university campus or student development and in other countries like China and Taiwan (Ying, 2008: 50). The author detailed the seven vectors and presented the Chinese adoption of this model in order to develop the student’s development. All these elements part of the model correspond to the new defended and applied teaching methods. It is through this theory we have been inspired to generate the definition of reform we shall end this work with.

As one can realize, this model reflects our thesis because reform is supposed to make changes in terms of the student’s development at all levels as the model reflects. This is also apparent in the LMD reform philosophy and terms like learner-centered approach, competency-based approach, quality assurance, learner autonomy and tutoring

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<sup>4</sup><http://www.cabrini.edu/communications/ProfDev/cardevChickering.html>

do all form the content of the LMD reform in Algeria. Such factors are supposed to create a more autonomous generation that can be able to take charge of, or take responsibility for, or control over its own learning (Bensen, 2004: 1); yet is there any *freedom* to exercise control over this learning? (a related issue to autonomy by Bensen, 2004: 1). This issue started in the 1970s in the foreign language context and then its attention shifted to leading to the emergence of a body of literature emphasizing the need to foster the socio-psychological attributes associated with learner autonomy in all foreign language education contexts (Dam 1995 and Little, 1991 cited in Benson and Huang, 2008: 424). Yet, it is only fifteen years earlier that learner autonomy becomes more significant. That is why; we question whether reaching autonomy in our learners through the LMD reform can be a reality.

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1. Participants

Our participants are advanced university EFL students inscribed in the second cycle of the LMD System. Seven of them were in their first year Master degree and five others are in Master two and they were all following the academic course rather than the professional. They were seven females and five males. The sample is quite important as far as the topic we are treating is concerned; our participants are first a product of the LMD reform that started in 2004/2005 in Algeria. In addition, they were preparing their second stage of the LMD system; that is the Master degree during the data collection stage of this research. This makes our subjects more appropriate to answer our questions that treat the link between education and reform. First, they are apt because they were learning in a higher education context and supposed to be educators in the near future. Again, they are suitable because they are a product of a system; which is still under evaluation; their view remains crucial. Finally, they are appropriate because they are supposed to have had reached the supposed degree of autonomy to be the expected qualified trainers; a detail we shall explore through their responses.

#### 3.2. Technique, Method and Procedure

To collect data, we have opted for online journals where six open-ended items were addressed to the twelve participants. We were in a recurrent online contact and questions were sent by April, 2010 and ended by May, 2010. The delay of data collection was justified, as advocated by the learners themselves, by the little frequency of using electronic addresses. Items were all open and ask about the student's lived experiences within the LMD system, their attitudes, their views, their position, their role. In other words, questions were asked in an overt manner to let the participant express himself/herself spontaneously. This was aimed to conduct data collection in an unstructured way. Journals can be appropriate to this study since there is a need to collect data in a written form with ample time for reflection about the topic. Our aim is to collect qualitative data and journals satisfy this aim.

### 4. Results and Discussion

Whilst using journals as a means of data collection, students provided an important amount of information. The issue at hand proved to be interesting for our subjects; and many revealed this overtly. This was clearly reflected through their answers and in their overt revelations about the importance of the question at hand.

#### 4.1. Education

We have asked a general and overt item about the educational system and reform at the first stage. We let the participants make the link by themselves as they conceive the issue. However, we shall try to treat each variable in a section and then discuss the link. Data about the educational system in higher education were perceived in and analyzed through most items namely: 1, 2, 3, 5 and 6. The totality of the participants agrees about the inadequacy of the educational system at higher educational level. They all referred to a number of problems we shall categorize in the coming lines. To illustrate, we can be best served by the S6<sup>5</sup> terms who said:

*“According to my experience, I think that education in our country needs a serious revolution and a deep reform by including all principle actors and integrate new technologies”*

To go further and in order to frame how educators and researchers try to model the classroom, we can mention Dornyei (1994). He denotes three components that are associated to classroom-specific factors; course specific, group specific and teacher specific. Such factors can be embedded in the elements we have developed from the participants' answers. After the analysis of the students' journals, we could categorize the educational problems they highlighted in the following points:

**a. Syllabus design, content inadequacy.** The most significant factor that the students revealed about the educational reform is the taught syllabus and the selected content they consider inadequate. Ten students out of

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<sup>5</sup> S refers to Student

twelve referred to this point in their journals (S1, S2, S3, S6, S7, S8, S9, S10, S11 and S12). Let us illustrate through the following example:

*S 7: May be most of the teachers have not been formed on syllabus design ,but in my opinion they have to assume this and they have to make research ,since at university level things should be founded on strong bases. Moreover, and if there is a syllabus it lacks internal validity; in didactics for example the purpose is to form future teachers, but there is little attention given to ... teaching skills in general.*

As an implication here, a number of students (S8, S11, S12) affirmed that there is a need of teachers' collaboration when designing a syllabus and choosing a content although such an initiative has been adopted, but was not successful since most instructors are not full time teachers in the Department of English (Idri, 2011a). In our definition of reform, one of the elements is "**Reliability and Integrity Development**" which focuses on changes in reform; changes will help learners contribute in their syllabus design and the teaching methodology; why not administrative practices (**c.f. our suggested definition of reform**). We also believe that this is less likely to occur if we do not raise the students' awareness about the objectives of the curriculum and its content. In her recommendations to students, Idri (2011b: 218) emphasized that students should determine clear objectives through identifying the usefulness of learning EFL. She added that teachers should explain right from the beginning the usefulness of his/her lectures, the objectives he/she intends to reach and the results he/she needs to reach.

All in all, students showed their interest in learning, but they consider the content inadequate to their needs. They recommend a careful selection of content and syllabi, easy to grasp, consistent, authentic and respond to the learners' needs

This point is what the coming educational problems highlight as advocated by the participants.

**b. No respect of students' needs and abilities.** This theme completes the previous one since in order to choose content and design a syllabus, we must go through a needs' analysis phase. As aforementioned, education should take into account the students' needs and interest since all turn around this student as the center of the training. Accordingly, Idri (2011b: 218) claimed that teachers should adjust the content to the learners' needs and abilities. Eight students out of twelve stated this in their answers (S1, S2, S3 S4, S6, S7, S10 and S12).

Here, we can state:

*S 6: set a collaborative programme which takes in consideration students and teachers needs in opening debates. Then, set an area of dialogue and knowledge sharing work with a skilled administrative staff and integration of new technologies in education.*

**c. Lack of qualified teachers, problem of pedagogy and mastery of the subject.** Students put focus on teachers' qualification which is the key of a successful pedagogy while teaching on the one hand and the mastery of the taught subject and its content on the other. Half of the participants mentioned this detail (S6, S7, S8, S10, S11 and S12). For instance, Student 4 confirmed that instructors do their best but they can only add more effort to simplify content to his students mainly if they are beginners.

In education, we believe that teachers should teach students, often a course of study or a practical skill, including learning and thinking skills. There are many different ways to teach and help students learn. This is often referred to as the teacher's pedagogy. When deciding what teaching method to use, a teacher will need to consider students' background knowledge, environment, and their learning goals. That is what our learners need from the instructor. Idri (2009) stated in her observation stage when evaluating the LMD reform at its piloting stage that many instructors did not change the schedule and the lectures' contents in the subjects they teach though the reform needs more new methods and revised curricula which serve the needs of not only the system but the learners in particular (Idri, 2009).

**d. No use of modern media and technologies and methodologies, confusion between theory and practice.** This theme completes the previous one as well. Seven participants seem to focus on the need of modern technologies and put theory into practice (S2, S6, S7, S8, S10, S11, S12). During at least the last six decades, there was a propagation of teaching methods in the field of foreign languages. Their vital aim and elementary objective has been to ensure a methodical and efficient learning of the target language they are exposed to. These methods focus mainly on the resources to be used, on the aspects of the language to be learned and the skills that the foreign language learners are expected to learn. The LMD reform at the higher education level suggests new subjects, defends technology use and updated teaching methods, it puts focus on quality assurance, but the need of such updated teaching methods is still demanded by our students. That is, the theoretical documents and the practice of this reform seem to be world apart.

Let us pursue in this point. In traditional classrooms, relations are *unidirectional*, structured and limited. The flow of exchange is mainly from teacher to learners. The mere role of the teacher is to transmit knowledge and

control its acquisition. If programmes are flexible, intervention may vary and the teacher-learner relation may be enriched and become more complex; multidirectional, and may make profit from the results of research works done in the field of group dynamics. Our students considered our classrooms as traditional and that such new teaching approaches as the humanistic approach are not adopted. Let us illustrate this point by the students' position. For instance, Student 02 revealed:

*S 2: Besides, the course is taught in a traditional way, that is, the teacher gives handouts and explains them to students who are required to be involved in preparing the lecture.*

The student seems aware that involving the student is a salient factor in teaching and learning. We believe that making the student involved in the preparation of the syllabus, the content and the lesson plan is more likely to develop his/her autonomy.

*S11 stated: Even in a practical context, theory is still the DOMINANT COMPASS leading the teacher*

When considering the previous elements through the learners' answers, one might notice that students, even at an advanced level, put focus on content and the subjects. In a study we conducted in 2004/2005, we realized in our observation stage and through their answers that their focus was put on the number of subjects taught instead of the content itself (Idri, 2009). To sum up our section, we can quote:

*S 6: of instructors and educators to deal with students' needs. Educational system is traditional and there is no area to the new technologies; new ways of thinking, invention, vision, collaboration.*

**e. Interact with the learners.** The concept of group dynamics is part of social psychology, which deals with the way individuals interact with each other within a social group. Group dynamics, however, is seen as the process by which individuals are integrated and part of a given group. The teacher as we consider him/her is a crucial part of the group that is the classroom. Hence, interaction is a fundamental issue that should be existent between the members of this group. When five of the participants feel the need to interact with the instructor, this means that they do not feel like this interaction exists (S1, S6, S7, S10 and S12). We can refer to Handley (1973: 106) who claimed that success in learning and in teaching depends greatly on the nature of teacher-learner interaction. We assume in relation to this that learning is less likely to occur if the notion of instructor-learner interaction fails (Idri, 2011b). In this concern, Idri (2011b: 207) stated:

*The first dimension involves the caring quality of the teacher. Hence, a good teacher is friendly, genuine in dialogue and expresses high immediacy tends to generate positive feelings in learners.*

Teachers should adjust the methods, techniques and strategies according to the learners' needs (Idri, 2011b: 218).

## 4.2. Education and Administrative Practices

**a. Authority-based relationship between the students, teachers and the administration.** When trying to make the learner at the centre of learning, one can understand that facilities should be offered to all the counterparts: students, teachers and administrators. In the LMD reform, the idea of accompaniment and tutoring is clearly stated in the texts. According to the executive decree N°09-03 of January 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2009 precisating the tutoring activity and its application, article 11 dictates that tutors from whom the ministry of higher education mention master and doctoral students, are supposed to have a number of hours devoted to the mission of tutoring. In addition, article 11 in the same text, the tutor should be subject of evaluation by the team of the training domain and the head of the Department through regular reports about the activities submitted by the tutor and the students' degree of satisfaction about the tutor's mission achievement. If we take into consideration what texts demand, this authority our master students revealed is less likely to occur. That is a theoretical text; official and hierarchy-based. However, our seven students out of twelve (S2, S3, S4, S7, S10, S11 and S12); who are Master students, still feel that there is an authority-based relationship. The text within the LMD reform relates the tutor (teacher, master and doctoral students) who are supposed to accompany first phase students (i.e. BA degree/License) and submit reports about the activities to the responsible of the domains (who are full-time teachers) and to the Head of the Department) who is an administrator. Yet, if we take reality as evidence, we can state:

*S 1: Indeed, there should be a harmony between students, teachers and school administrator; namely, the job of school administrator is set educational goals and monitor students progress ,but without the help of teachers ,he cannot do so because thanks to teachers that school administrator are aware of students' needs to make decisions concerning school.*

The student in question seems to have some degree of consciousness and autonomy in his way of thinking. Even though the above-stated article has never been applied in our institution at least in the era of these students, the student seems conscious of the need of putting the three counterparts together as partners instead of an authority. In our study we presented in a national conference about the evaluation of the LMD reform in 2010, we concluded:

*The conclusion we can derive from our experience in Béjaia concerning our three concepts is that autonomy is hardly perceived in our learners (with the exception of a minority)... autonomy is tied to its prerequisites which are continuous evaluation, tutoring and accompaniment. One might notice through this conference that neither of the above is applied in our university in the way the LMD system suggests.*

To end up this section we can add Student 7's comment as a sign of authority:

*S7: In Algeria there are many wrong things in the educational system, and the worst thing is that we do not accept the novice and the productive ideas: from the part of productive and reflective teachers as from the part of competent students*

**b. Do not understand the student's life to facilitate it, no interaction.** As a follow up of the previous theme related to educational reform and administrative practices, five students (S1, S3, S4, S7, S9 and S10) revealed that administrators are not close to the students, they do not understand them and that is why; they cannot facilitate their life. Let us choose Student 1's quote:

*S1: Administrative practices are not always good in our country; namely they do not always facilitate the student's life.*

According to the participants, there should be a interpersonal link between the administrators, teachers and students. When interaction is positive, the education is more likely to be successful. Like S1, S3 summarizes the students' needs as follows:

*S3: What is wrong with our administrative practices is that they don't know the students; they don't know the student's needs, their cultural background and other social factors. They are not close to the students in order to know their problems.*

As we have advocated and as we have been defending our thesis, the student is an individual with his socio-cultural background and with his own personality that makes him/her distinct from any other person. That is why; responding to the learner's needs and being close to the learners can minimize the negative outcomes our participants highlight. Lack of interaction and communication with the students has been omnipresent in the participants' journals and in various contexts. That is, it argues about the view we have that there is a very big gap between the LMD reform's texts and its application. In the texts, students should be accompanied all along the training, from the first year for integration purposes to the final year for preparation to the professional life. For instance, we can quote this passage:

*"every student should take profit from a reception device, accompaniment and support which promotes his success and helps him assure a coherence in his pedagogical course as well as his orientation"*  
(National Conference of Universities: LMD Vocabulary, Mars, 2004: 37)

However, the administration prepares plans for tutoring, reception days and groups' representatives, but the way things occur are conceived differently by a number of students. For instance,

*S9: even the huge amount of capacities our institution have, students still face many barriers to have an access to them. Let alone the communication between administration and student it is quite absent although the existence of delegates. I think it is better for the administration sees the student as a part of that educational institution not as he is considered now*

This view is quite important. We do have the raw material in the reform's document, we do have learners, teachers and administrators but things still go not as expected. There is problem in the readiness to work in such a different way, we should start changing the concerned counterparts' attitudes, beliefs and practices in a gradual way and get them engaged. In other words, students should be involved in the decision-making process. That is more likely to lead to the learner's autonomy and responsibility as future educators and decision-makers at the socio-economic or socio-educational level.

**c. No link between administrative practices and pedagogical outcomes.** Another salient category and complementary theme with the two first ones appeared. Three participants (S2, S7 and S11) put focus on the question of the link between administrative practices and pedagogical outcomes. For them, administrators put focus on the administrative practice itself and not on its role in terms of being a facilitator for students and teachers. That is, we believe that the administration remains a medium that assures the well-functioning of the institution. It should relate learners and students, relate administration to pedagogy. Let us cite:

*S7: In which concerns the administration, I can say that there is no interest in promoting the "pedagogic life of students"; the main and unique interest is unfortunately the PV<sup>6</sup>s and the exams so that the "administrative year" finishes in its planned day.*

Along with these lines, S 11 continues the idea by:

*S 11: There is little care about the outcome and whether or not students get advantage from the syllabus they are taught. I mean that the most relevant point administrators are worrying about is how to get marks and fill out a FORMAL report to the upper division*

#### 4.2. Reform

Reform in the Algerian higher education started in the flow of the academic year 2004/2005. However, we still face many problems in terms of change. We should not ignore that any reform has to do with the learners and teachers and the type of interpersonal relationship that must reign. That is what Waks (2007) defended as an issue in his article and he called for fundamental change. We do need such a basic change as well to call reform as such. In the coming lines, a number of themes emerged from the participants' journals although little is explained given the depth of the issue:

**a. No preparatory phase before adopting the LMD system, unpredictable results.** Our three participants (S2, S3 and S4) question the issue of putting the LMD reform into practice without preparing the ground, without pre-testing it and without predicting its results. That is what S3 claimed:

*S3: It is just putting rules, adapting new systems which are designed in specific contexts and without predicting the results.*

We cannot ignore that this system embeds quite interesting elements that encourage development and try to follow international educational systems. However, there should be done in terms of stages and steps; evaluated gradually as well. In this, S4 said:

*S 4: It is for sure that there is something wrong with the new educational system here in Algeria, may be the problem is not in the educational system itself, but in the way it was implemented. The problem in our country is decision making, i.e. before implementing any new educational system, a deep study and examination should be made before any decisions are to be made.*

The student at hand makes it evident that our students do not seem to lack ideas and positions. They seem to be confident, able to give evaluations and need to be engaged. The problem of no preparatory phase can result in ignoring what the system is and what are its objectives as precised by Student 2. It is true that The student arrives with little knowledge and information about the formations, the rules that govern university, organisation of teaching, pedagogical spaces. That is why; there should be a clarification through days of information which remain necessary to orient fully the students (Idri, 2009).

**b. Parents should also be involved in evaluating the system.** Although only two students referred to this point (S1 and S3), we still feel the need to consider their view. Such students seem to belong to the loco parentis principle and this can be interpreted in terms of lack of autonomy or readiness to be autonomous. We can go back to our sample; advanced learners who are supposed to be trainers in the near future still need their parents to get involved in their education and decision-making process.

In the LMD reform, it is the tutor who takes this responsibility and not the parent. He/she, hence, becomes an important actor in this educational system and in the learning process as a whole.

#### 4. 3. Conclusion of Results in Relation to Autonomy

To follow up the above thoughts, the tutor can also be a guide, a companion, but never a problem-solver; his skill should and must be acquired by the student himself/herself as the Socratic Method dictates. That is to say, he/she should contrarily develop the students' problem-solving capabilities, their communicative skills with the diverse partners of formation. Additionally, the tutor is not to be an expert in the content, but rather a companion of the student in collecting appropriate data in a maximum of autonomy. According to our data analysis, most of the participants put focus on content, syllabus (S7, S8, S9, S10 and S11) and the type of relationship with their teachers and administrators, yet few of them highlighted the freedom of the training and how this training is to be managed; that is autonomy. In this, S2 stated that students are still receptive:

*S 2: Despite the fact that LMD system is based on learner centered approach, Students are still receptive and not productive. They wait the lecture from their teacher as well as they are limited to what they take in classroom.*

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<sup>6</sup> PV: Procès Verbal (the document where marks are reported and handed to the administration)

Again, it is vital to find out equilibrium between the student's supervision and the necessity to develop his/her sense of initiative, his/her autonomy and his/her ability to face novel, complex situations.

As concerns the LMD reform, it recommends a great participation of the student in his/her formation. This is to be achieved through the learners' personal work which has a considerable weight in the evaluation process.

The conclusion we can derive from our experience in Béjaia concerning our three concepts is that autonomy is hardly perceived in our learners (with the exception of a minority). However, this can in no way be the answer of our questioning; that is, this does not mean that the LMD system failed in achieving the learners' autonomy. Simply, autonomy is tied to its prerequisites which are continuous evaluation, tutoring and accompaniment (Idri, 2011a)

To end up, we can refer to S7 who mentioned:

*S7: Concerning the administration I suggest that its practitioners come back to their respectful and initial mission which aims to prepare a healthy environment where teaching/learning takes place, and get rid of the human weaknesses which makes from the administration a tool for exercising pressure and keeping ones feet in a fresh temperature along the seasons. The CHANGE in our country is difficult, but we have to struggle and to give the example.*

To end up, we shall then recapitulate and try to match each letter to one of Chickering's Vectors. Through experience, readings, research about the LMD system's characteristics, we could understand that the system emphasizes the idea of continuous evaluation and tutoring, which are believed to lead towards the learners' autonomy (Idri, 2011). Its aim is also to augment the learners' competence referred to as quality assurance. Hence, we can refer the first "R" to Rising Autonomy through Ongoing Evaluation and Tutoring. Of course, learners' autonomy is becoming a great concern of researchers trying to find out ways to make both students and teachers autonomous. (add a reference here) However, this autonomy cannot be guaranteed and high quality cannot be reached if the learners' competences are not developed (Hamada, 2011). We mean here that competences refer to the learners' intellectual competence, linguistics competence, physical and manual competence, social competence, cultural competence, pragmatic competence, interpersonal competence, etc. All these competences can make of our students future leaders, able to change with their strong, equilibrated identities. The "E", then, refers to Expanding Competence and Establishing Identity. In learning, we are also part of the classroom as a social group. Good and safe learning environments should be available. The "F" is then Freeing Interpersonal Relationships. In such a case, our learners will be more engaged and hence more decisive. That is why; the "O" in reform means students' Objective Statement. Such changes will help learners contribute in their syllabus design and the teaching methodology; why not administrative practices for a more Reliability and Integrity Development. This is what the second "R" is about. Finally, as we referred to affect and the emotional well-being that students should have, our reforms in learning should be what the "M" describes as Managing Emotions.

### **5. Implications according to the Students as Decision-makers**

1. Including parents to better understand the students' state (psychological, health, problems, etc.)
2. Establish a close link with the students to respond to their needs, work more collaboratively and effectively with students.
3. Reward any profitable work coming from student; this will challenge them to be more productive.
4. Engage students in syllabus design, teaching methods and set out richer, unified and up to date syllabi.
5. Careful choice of skilled administrators is needed
6. Adopt strict and rigorous rules against abuse and rules' violation
7. Provide AUTHENTIC situations for students to evaluate their real potential.
8. Adopt strict and rigorous rules against abuse and rules' violation.

### **6. Conclusion**

All in all, our educational reform should implement learners' abilities as autonomous individuals. We recapitulate our proposed elements for reform as:

**R** Rising Autonomy through Competence Development

**E** Expanding Competence and Establishing Identity

**F** Freeing Interpersonal Relationships

**O** Objective Statement

**R** Reliability and Integrity Development

**M** Managing Emotions

We may add that the problem we have stated is a salient contribution to identify the problems students and teachers live. However, this does not mean that the evaluation of the system is negative. We are still trying to work on this system because we need to diagnose the problems for a better achievement in the coming experiences and for a better result with coming generations.

On cannot further ignore the willingness our government has to take this heavy responsibility though the available means are very limited especially with the problem of the specialised teachers we need for tutoring and supervising our students. Hopefully, this system will reach its drawn objectives and be a real successful endeavour if made into practice following the hierarchy (governmental, institutional, administrative and pedagogical levels). Still, the question that might loom on the horizon of the LMD system now is:

*Is the reform to be successful to make change?*

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Myths and Reality. Ten students from a Moscow school took part in an exchange programme. They spent three weeks in the United States in a small town, Fairfax, which is not far from Washington, D.C. Russian pupils attended classes in Fairfax High School; so they had the perfect opportunity to lead the lifestyle of typical American teenagers. The quality of teaching can only be compared with the quality of education in the British schools. Don't forget, English is the mother tongue for most Irish. However, Irish accommodations, despite their good quality, are cheaper than the British. Education and Reform to Reach Autonomous Learners: Between Reality and Myth. Foreign language anxiety among Algerian EFL students: The case of first year students of English at the university of Abderrahmane Mira-Bachaja; LMD (Licence/Master/Doctorat) system group Sources of FNE among First Year LMD1 Students of Abderrahmane Mira University. Foreign Language Learning, Classroom Interaction and Lack of Motivation: the Case of First Year Students of English in the University of Bachaja; LMD System Group. The LMD System Experience as a Struggle between the Educational Development and Reform: An Anal Augmented Reality technology in education. Educational institutions that use the latest technology in the classroom as well as in field trips are going to create a completely different learning experience opportunity for the Alpha children. And with it, they are going to contribute to a better preparation for the leaders of the future. Some companies such as Indestry, an award-winning Augmented Reality experiences for entertainment, marketing, and education company, can certainly bring the dinosaur experience to the classroom in the same way it did for Jurassic Park at Universal Studios in Orlando, Florida. In other words, this is one of the best ways an educator can use to engage and motivate students.