

## **The Effects of Student-Led Conferences on Learning Motivation and Responsibility: An Action Research Study**

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### **Abstract**

During the 2023-2024 school year, 6th-grade students from an urban primary school in the Directorate of Piraeus participated in a parent reporting programme utilising the "Student-Led Conferences" (SLCs) method. The purpose of this action research was twofold: firstly, to empower students' involvement in informing their parents; and secondly, to investigate their views regarding the method's impact on their motivation and sense of personal responsibility for learning, as well as their perceptions of the implementation process. For data collection, a questionnaire with both closed and open-ended questions was administered at the end of the first and the third trimesters. The results indicated that SLCs were accepted as a positive pedagogical practice that reinforced students' active involvement, cultivated their autonomy and critical self-awareness, and contributed to the formation of responsible attitudes towards learning. Students' suggestions for improvement primarily focused on technical issues of implementation, confirming the acceptance of the method's pedagogical core.

**Keywords:** Student-Led Conferences, Action Research, Motivation, Responsibility, Self-Regulated Learning.

### **Introduction**

In the Greek educational system, informing parents about their children's progress at the end of each term relies primarily on traditional practices. Typically, this is conducted through private meetings between the parent and the teacher, where the cognitive, social, and emotional aspects of the student's development are discussed. Even though the discussion concerns the child's learning trajectory, the student remains absent from the process, deprived of the opportunity to express their perspective by highlighting their achievements or discussing the difficulties encountered during the term (Fuge, 2018; Hackmann, 1996; Wyk, 2023). Consequently, the sense of ownership and personal responsibility that could be developed regarding their learning journey is limited (Benson & Barnett, 2005; Marquardt, 2003; Nauss, 2010; Shannon, 1997).

The "Student-Led Conferences" (SLCs) method was developed in the late 1980s in the United States (Guyton & Fielstein, 1989; Little & Allan, 1989). It aims to bridge the gap created by traditional parent information meetings by assigning a leading role to the student, who is required to present both their achievements and the challenges encountered during the term, utilising their individual portfolio (Benson & Barnett, 2005; Hackmann, 1996).

The method has been implemented across all levels of school education and appears to yield positive results by enhancing motivation and the personal sense of responsibility towards learning, thereby improving learning outcomes (Meyers, 1998; Nauss, 2010; Pihlgren, 2013).

Grounded in the philosophy of students' active engagement in the learning process, we chose to implement SLCs in a 6th-grade class of an urban primary school during the 2023–2024 school year. This decision stemmed, on one hand, from our concern regarding the

limited or non-existent opportunities students have to take an active role in presenting their learning journey, and on the other hand, from the reduced learning motivation observed in recent years (McCombs, 2015). Furthermore, the decision to conduct this specific study was reinforced by the absence of corresponding research within the Greek educational context.

Our objective was to investigate: (1) how students evaluate the SLCs method, and (2) to what extent they consider it helpful in increasing their motivation and personal sense of responsibility for learning.

### **Student Led Conferences (SLCs)**

"Student-Led Conferences" (SLCs) constitute an alternative approach compared to traditional reporting, as students assume the responsibility of presenting their progress to their parents.

Although SLCs appear to focus on a specific moment, namely, the end of the term, it is a process that extends throughout the term (Benson & Barnett, 2005; Foster-King, 2011; Hackmann, 1996; Marquardt, 2003; Nauss, 2010) and comprises three distinct but interconnected phases:

*Phase 1: Goal Setting and Planning* This phase begins at the start of the term and recurs whenever students engage with new content. The teacher informs them about what will be taught and outlines the cognitive, social, and emotional objectives. Subsequently, through discussion and collaboration, the expected learning outcomes are defined, and the method by which each student will work to achieve them is planned.

*Phase 2: Implementation, Feedback, and Reflection* During the second phase, students implement the plan they have drafted. Simultaneously, they monitor their progress and proceed with adjustments if deemed necessary, receiving feedback from the teacher. They collect evidence, organise their portfolio, and formulate—in collaboration with the teacher—a presentation script by engaging in critical reflection on their learning journey. This script constitutes the basis upon which they will rely to inform their parents.

*Phase 3: Presentation* At the end of the term, students, taking a leading role, invite their parents to an official meeting to present their progress. The session is conducted in a private setting and at a scheduled time, with the presence of the teacher, who intervenes supportively if required. During the meeting, the student, utilising evidence from their portfolio, presents the goals they had set, the strategies followed, and the results achieved. Subsequently, they facilitate the discussion with the parents, who may ask questions and request clarifications. The process concludes with proposals for future cooperation between the child, the parents, and the teacher.

Findings from international literature indicate that, through SLC processes, students acquire motivation and a deeper awareness of their personal responsibility for their cognitive, social, and emotional development.

#### *SLCs as a framework for enhancing motivation*

Motivation for learning constitutes one of the most significant factors in school success. However, in school practice, we often encounter students lacking motivation for learning, especially if the school environment fails to focus on and cultivate their interests. Research indicates that SLCs increase students' motivation for learning as they place them at the centre of the learning process, transforming them from passive recipients of knowledge into active co-shapers of their learning trajectory (Benson & Barnett, 2005; Marquardt, 2003; Nauss, 2010; Shannon, 1997).

Self-Determination Theory (SDT) provides a robust framework for understanding how SLCs enhance student motivation. According to SDT, individual motivation increases when three basic psychological needs are supported: Autonomy, Competence, and Relatedness (Ryan, 2023).

The need for "Autonomy" concerns the individual's feeling of having the possibility of choice, in contrast to the feeling of control or coercion by others (Weir, 2025). SLCs support this need in multiple ways: Firstly, the student's leading role in the presentation during Phase 3 signals the transfer of control. It is the student who invites the parents, facilitates the discussion, and presents their achievements. Secondly, assuming responsibility for shaping the session's content through the selection and organisation of the work (portfolio) to be presented, reinforces the sense of ownership over the educational journey. (Wyk, 2023). Finally, Phase 1 (Goal Setting and Planning), which involves planning how the student will work to achieve their goals, empowers volition and autonomy in decision-making regarding their learning (Benson & Barnett, 2005; Hackmann, 1996).

The second psychological need that reinforces learning motivation is the sense of "Competence", defined as the individual's belief that they possess the ability to successfully perform a specific activity (Weir, 2025). SLCs satisfy this need through assessment and reflection. Assessment in SLCs functions as an authentic and supportive practice aiming to enhance learning rather than merely measure it (Kouloubaritsi & Matsagkouras, 2004). The comparison of student achievements is not based on the performance of their peers, but in relation to the personal goals they have set. This focus on individual progress protects their self-esteem and reinforces their sense of self-efficacy (Foster-King, 2011). Furthermore, reviewing the student portfolio based on evidence they have collected themselves allows them to view their developmental path holistically, examine their working methods, recognise their successes, identify points of difficulty, evaluate or revise the strategies followed, and take initiatives for the continuous improvement of their learning (Benson & Barnett, 2005; Foster-King, 2011; Kouloubaritsi & Matsagkouras 2004; Meyers, 1998; Nauss, 2010).

The need for "Relatedness" refers to the need to feel connected and belong to a supportive social context (Ryan, 2023). In this context, SLCs create a unique three-way framework (child, parents, teacher) which serves this need. The presence of the teacher, who intervenes only supportively (Benson & Barnett, 2005), signals the school's trust in the student's ability to manage their academic growth. This trust is strengthened as students assume the responsibility of shaping the content of the session with their parents (Berger et al. 2019; Nauss, 2010). Finally, the fact that the process concludes with proposals for future cooperation establishes social connection, ensuring that the student feels supported by all key adults in their life.

**Table1: Student led conferences and self-determination theory**

Basic Psychological Need (SDT).	SLCs Practices	Connection Between SLCs and SDT
<b>Autonomy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Setting personal learning goals</li> <li>• Selecting portfolio evidence</li> <li>• Student’s leading role in presenting progress (Phases 1, 2, &amp; 3)</li> </ul>	Control shifts from external factors (teacher-parent) to the student, enhancing their autonomy through responsibility for their choices.
<b>Competence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence-based self-assessment (portfolio)</li> <li>• Comparison of outcomes with personal goals</li> <li>• Encouragement of continuous improvement (Phase 2)</li> </ul>	Assessment is formative and reflective, supporting the sense of competence and self-efficacy.
<b>Relatedness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Triadic meeting held in a private and supportive setting</li> <li>• Planning future cooperation (Parent-Child-Teacher) (Phase 3)</li> </ul>	The environment in which progress is presented is safe and supportive, enabling the student to feel accepted and connected to the key adults in their life.

*SLCs and Self-Regulated Learning (SRL)*

The development of personal responsibility in learning is inextricably linked to students' ability to regulate their own learning (Cleary et al., 2020). The Theory of Self-Regulated Learning (SRL) encompasses a system of cyclically linked, goal-oriented skills and processes that allow students to manage their thoughts, behaviours, and emotions to achieve their learning goals (Panagakos & Tzanaki, 2007; Zumbunn et al., 2011). With its cyclical structure, the SLC method functions as a structured SRL intervention.

SRL theory relies on cyclical models, with one of the most popular being Zimmerman's model, which develops across three phases: Forethought Phase, Performance Phase, and Self-Reflection Phase (Zimmerman & Moylan, 2009).

SLCs as a Cyclical Process of Self-Regulated Learning:

*1st SLC Phase: Goal Setting and Planning:* This corresponds to the "Forethought Phase". In this phase, students analyse the learning content, define their goals, and activate their strategies and motivation, planning how they will achieve the results (Benson & Barnett, 2005).

*2nd SLC Phase: Implementation, Feedback, and Reflection:* This corresponds to the "Performance Phase". Here, students execute the task, monitor their progress, and use self-monitoring strategies to remain dedicated and motivated (Panadero, 2017). The collection of evidence and the organisation of the portfolio constitute tangible proof of this self-monitoring (Nauss, 2010). Furthermore, by applying critical reflection and self-assessment, they understand how they learn and engage in metacognitive processes (Kouloubaritsi & Matsagkouras, 2004; Zimmerman & Moylan, 2009).

*3rd SLC Phase: Presentation:* The presentation functions as the culminating act of reflection and metacognition. Students assess their performance, recognise successes and points of difficulty, and proceed to the attribution of their results. Through these processes, they reinforce their metacognitive skills, which will influence their approach to future tasks (Gay, 2011; Zimmerman & Moylan, 2009). The completion of the presentation with proposals for

future improvement closes the loop, providing data for the next forethought and planning phase.

From the above, we conclude that SLCs directly enhance the student's sense of responsibility. Initially, students realise that learning is a continuous path for which they bear the primary share of responsibility, and they are encouraged to commit to their continuous progress (Wyk, 2023). Furthermore, their internal commitment transforms into accountability (Harris-Wilmot, 2025), as they are called upon, utilising their communication skills, to explain to their parents how they worked, the concepts and ideas they mastered during the term, and to proceed with their next planning steps.

**Table 2: Alignment of student led conferences with self-regulated learning and responsibility**

SLC Phases	SRL Phases	Responsibility Enhancement
Phase 1: Goal Setting & Planning	Forethought Phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Goal setting</li> <li>• Motivational orientation</li> <li>• Autonomy in planning</li> </ul>
Phase 2: Implementation, Feedback & Reflection	Performance Phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responsibility in collecting evidence (Portfolio)</li> <li>• Critical Thinking</li> <li>• Metacognition</li> </ul>
Phase 3: Presentation	Self-Reflection Phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accountability</li> <li>• Communication skills</li> <li>• Planning future initiatives</li> </ul>

In summary, the literature review indicates that SLCs function as a coherent learning framework, integrating the key elements of Self-Determination Theory and Self-Regulated Learning. Specifically, SLCs support students' intrinsic motivation and self-determination by satisfying their three basic psychological needs: autonomy (in goal setting), competence (in goal achievement), and relatedness (social interaction). Simultaneously, the method facilitates Self-Regulated Learning processes (such as goal setting, planning, monitoring, assessment, and reflection), thereby cultivating students' personal responsibility for their learning journey.

**Research Questions**

Based on the aforementioned literature, it was hypothesised that the implementation of SLCs in the 6th Grade of a Greek urban Primary School would reinforce the students' role in parent reporting and could simultaneously increase their sense of personal responsibility and motivation for learning.

To investigate this hypothesis, the following research questions were formulated:

1. To what extent do students participating in SLCs processes consider that the method contributed to enhancing their motivation and responsibility for their learning progress?
2. Do students' perceptions regarding the impact of SLCs on their motivation and responsibility remain constant or change over time?
3. Which elements of the SLC method do students evaluate positively?
4. What emotions does their participation in the method evoke?
5. Which elements of the method do they consider less effective or negative?
6. What suggestions do students make for the improvement of SLCs processes?

The research findings are expected to strengthen or weaken the prospect of wider implementation of SLCs in Greek school units, while simultaneously providing useful knowledge for educators and stakeholders interested in introducing innovative practices to the Greek educational system.

### **Methodology**

The observation that traditional forms of reporting are limited to teacher-parent interaction, without substantial student involvement, combined with the continuously declining student motivation in recent years, served as the starting point for a literature review. The aim of this review was to identify pedagogical methods that could effectively resolve the issue. From the study of relevant literature, SLCs emerged as a pedagogical approach with positive documented results.

The selection of Action Research as a methodological approach was deemed appropriate, as it combines the implementation of innovative pedagogical practices with the reflective investigation of their effectiveness in the natural educational environment. Simultaneously, it offers the teacher the opportunity to reflect systematically on their practice, aiming for its improvement and transformation (Avgitidou, 2014; Katsarou & Tsafos, 2013). As Katsarou and Tsafos (2013) argue, it is a process of dialogue between theory and practice, during which theory is re-evaluated through its implementation and, correspondingly, practice is enriched based on theoretical documentation, leading to the production of new pedagogical knowledge.

This specific methodology enhances teachers' professional development, as it provides a framework for understanding and managing problematic situations in daily school life. In other words, it functions as a form of reflective study on an existing problem, within a specific context, aiming at intervention and the improvement of educational practice (Avgitidou, 2014).

In this context, the present study was designed and implemented, involving seventeen (17) students from a 6th-grade class in an urban Primary School. The teacher in charge proceeded with its implementation, following five distinct actions:

*Action 1: Information:* At the beginning of the school year, parents and students were informed about the differentiations that would be adopted in the usual progress reporting process, within the framework of SLCs implementation. Additionally, the parents provided written consent for their children to complete a questionnaire at the end of the 1st and 3rd trimesters.

*Action 2: Goal Setting & Organisation:* From the beginning of each term, and throughout its duration, students were informed about the educational process goals. In collaboration with the teacher, they formulated the corresponding expected learning outcomes, which were linked to daily school life and specific subjects (Language, Mathematics, History, Geography, Science). At the same time, the teacher supported the children in the process of organising and enriching their portfolio, applying a gradual withdrawal of guidance in each term, aiming to strengthen their autonomy.

*Action 3: Preparation:* Two weeks prior to each meeting with parents, students, with gradually decreasing guidance from the teacher, drafted their personal presentation script. In this script, they recorded the purpose of inviting their parents, the goals they had set, the actions they took, the difficulties they encountered, the tasks related to their goals, as well as the form of support they wished to receive from family and school. Students practised presenting their script in groups and reformulated it based on feedback received from their classmates and the teacher.

*Action 4: Implementation:* One week before the presentation, students prepared invitations for their parents. On the scheduled day, they conducted the reporting meetings, lasting approximately 20–30 minutes, in accordance with the SLC philosophy, across all three terms of the school year.

*Action 5: Evaluation:* Following the completion of the meetings in the first and third terms, students were asked to complete a feedback-evaluation questionnaire regarding the method.

#### *Sample and Research Instrument*

The study participants consisted of seventeen (17) students from the 6th Grade of an urban Primary School, located in a middle-class area of Piraeus. Specifically, there were eight (8) girls and nine (9) boys. Sixteen (16) students were of Greek origin, while one (1) student was of Albanian origin, fully integrated into the Greek school environment. Furthermore, two students in the class had formal diagnoses of learning difficulties: one with dyslexia and the other with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). Additionally, two students were facing difficulties in managing their anxiety. The overall cognitive level of the class was medium. Specifically, 20% of the students had a high cognitive level, 70% had a medium cognitive level, and 10% had a low cognitive level.

The research instrument was designed based on the literature review of relevant studies (Benson & Barnett, 2005; Foster-King, 2011; Fuge, 2018; Hackmann, 1996; Orso & Morgan, 2014) and our multi-year experience as educators in the Greek educational system. It included both closed and open-ended questions, allowing for the collection of quantitative and qualitative data, aiming for a more comprehensive research approach (Isari & Pourkos, 2015).

It focused on: (a) the impact of SLCs on enhancing motivation and the personal sense of responsibility (accountability) for the learning trajectory, and (b) capturing students' views regarding SLCs processes and the emotions generated during the presentation of their progress.

It should be noted that, for the purposes of the classroom intervention, the method was introduced to students under the title "I present my progress" to make it more accessible and understandable. Consequently, this phrasing was used in the questionnaire items.

The instrument was divided into two sections. The first section consisted of seven (7) closed questions using a 5-point Likert scale, where one (1) indicated "strongly disagree" and five (5) indicated "strongly agree". It included three (3) questions referring to student motivation, such as: "*The 'I present my progress' programme helped me try harder in my lessons throughout the term*", and four (4) questions referring to the personal sense of responsibility for learning (accountability), such as: "*The 'I present my progress' programme helped me feel responsible for my learning and progress*".

The second section comprised four (4) open-ended questions addressing views on the positive and negative aspects of SLCs, the emotions created during participation, and students' suggestions for improving SLC processes.

The questionnaire was administered twice. It was completed for the first time at the end of the first term and for the second time at the end of the third term; in both instances, this took place after the children's participation in the SLCs. The objective of this double administration was to determine whether students' perceptions of SLCs remain constant or change over time.

We chose not to examine the reliability of the research instrument because our goal was the improvement of pedagogical practice within the specific context, rather than the standardisation of tools (Cohen, et al., 2007). Furthermore, checking for reliability with indices such as Cronbach's Alpha would not offer stable or reliable information for this specific questionnaire due to the small number of items (Pallant, 2010).

The following section presents the analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data collected.

#### *Data Analysis*

For the processing of quantitative data, Microsoft Excel software was used, with the support of the Real Statistics add-in, applying descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. The analysis of qualitative data was carried out through thematic content analysis, according

to which researchers familiarise themselves with the data, code them, identify recurring themes, review and restructure the findings, name the themes, and write up the analysis findings (Isari & Pourkos, 2015).

The results emerging from the data analysis are presented below.

*Quantitative Analysis Results*

Based on the collected quantitative responses on a 1-5 Likert scale, four (4) new variables were created, two (2) for each term. Specifically, two (2) new variables were created representing the mean scores of responses regarding motivation, one for the first and one for the third term, named "Motivation". Another two (2) variables were created representing the mean scores of responses related to the personal sense of responsibility (accountability) for learning, one for each term, first and third, named "Responsibility".

Descriptive statistics were performed for the description of the variable "Motivation" for both time points (first and third term).

The results are shown in Table 3.

**Table 3: Impact of SLCs on learning motivation**

Term	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Median	Maximum	Minimum	Shapiro-Wilk Test
<b>1<sup>o</sup></b>	17	4,33	0,63	4,67	5	3	0,00484
<b>3<sup>o</sup></b>	17	4,27	0,77	4,50	5	3	0,00836

The data indicate that students positively evaluated the impact of SLCs on their learning motivation during both the first and the final terms of the school year. The mean score at both time points was high (M = 4.33 and M = 4.27, respectively, on a 1–5 scale).

Due to the non-normality of the variables, a Wilcoxon signed-rank test for paired samples was conducted to determine whether the differences between the first and third terms were statistically significant. The test indicated that there is no statistically significant difference in students' perceptions regarding the impact of SLCs on their learning motivation between the first and third terms ( $z = 0.35$ ,  $p = .735$ ), with a very small effect size ( $r = .097$ ). The median for the impact of SLCs on learning motivation was Mdn = 4.67 in the first term and Mdn = 4.50 in the third term.

Regarding the "Responsibility" variable, a descriptive statistical analysis was performed on the data from the first and third terms, which are presented in Table 4:

**Table 4: Impact of SLCs on learning responsibility**

Term	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Median	Maximum	Minimum	Shapiro-Wilk test
<b>1<sup>o</sup></b>	17	4,56	0,38	4,5	5	3,75	0,083
<b>3<sup>o</sup></b>	17	4,35	0,49	4,5	5	3,25	0,011

The descriptive statistics indicate that students positively evaluated the impact of SLCs on their personal sense of responsibility for learning during both the first and third terms of the school year. The mean score at both time points was high (M = 4.56 and M = 4.35, respectively, on a 1–5 Likert scale), suggesting that most children perceive the method as a means of enhancing their personal sense of responsibility for learning.

To determine whether the difference in views between the first and third terms regarding the personal sense of responsibility for learning was significant, a non-parametric Wilcoxon signed-rank test for paired samples was conducted. The test indicated that there is no statistically significant difference in students' perceptions regarding the impact of SLCs on their personal sense of responsibility for learning between the first and third terms ( $z = 1.81$ ,

$p = .072$ ), although the effect size appeared to be moderate ( $r = .47$ ). The median for the impact of SLCs on the sense of responsibility for learning was identical for both the first and third terms ( $Mdn = 4.5$ ).

*Qualitative Analysis Results*

Student responses to the four open-ended questions were analysed using thematic content analysis (Isari, & Pourkos 2015). During the processing phase, four themes were established, corresponding to the questions: (a) What do you like about the "I present my progress" programme? (b) How did you feel during the presentation of your progress to your parents? (c) What did you not like about the process of presenting your progress? (d) If you could change something to make the process better, what would it be?

Statements were grouped into sub-themes emerging from the analysis of the responses. Finally, a comparison was conducted between the statements of the first and third terms to capture potential changes in the children's views regarding the implementation of the SLC method.

Table 5 presents the themes, sub-themes, and the frequency of each sub-theme in students' responses for the first and third terms.

**Table 5: Student views on SLC implementation (terms 1 & 3)**

Themes	Sub-themes	Frequency term 1	Frequency term 2
<b>Positive Aspects</b>	Autonomy & Responsibility	9	8
	Self-awareness & Self-assessment	5	7
	Connection with parents	3	3
	Process structure and organisation	4	1
<b>Emotions</b>	Anxiety	9	9
	Joy, Excitement & Pride,	9	10
	Shyness, Discomfort & Fear	3	4
	Understanding, Relief & Comfort	2	1
<b>Negative aspects</b>	No negative aspects reported	10	10
	Presentation duration	1	-
	Excessive writing	3	4
	Critique of personal performance	3	2
<b>Suggestions for improvement</b>	No aspects for improvement reported	9	9
	Reducing written workload	4	4
	Procedural suggestions (oral delivery, computer usage, specific timing)	2	1
	Focus on self-improvement	1	2

Regarding the 1st Theme: "What did you like about the programme?", it is observed that in the students' comments, during both the first and third terms, the opportunity provided by the method for autonomy and responsibility prevails:

*"That we express our opinion and experience what teachers do" (S.1). "I liked that instead of the teacher presenting, I was presenting" (S.3). "I like that now we are the ones talking to our parents about our progress" (S.14).*

Furthermore, it is observed that in the third term, the frequency of references to issues of self-awareness and self-assessment increases:

*"That I have the opportunity to explain to my parents the progress and the difficulties I faced" (S.4). "That I chose what to show and explained what I understood and what I didn't" (S.9). "I like that I realised on my own the things I achieved" (S.13).*

Following with fewer statements in both terms are the themes of connection with parents and process structure/novelty:

*"That mum and dad are smiling" (S.6). "I like that the teacher and my parents understand how I feel about school" (S.8). "I like the way I present my progress to my parents" (S.10). "I like that... we learn to organise better and I present my papers on my own... and I can know from early on what we will do in the coming term" (S.12).*

Regarding the 2nd Theme: "How did you feel during the presentation of your progress?", children report with almost equal frequency, in both terms, emotions of anxiety and joy-pride, as often one follows the other:

*"I didn't feel anxiety, on the contrary, joy" (S.2). "At first, I was anxious but along the way I was relieved and felt joy for what I achieved" (S.4). "I felt a little anxiety but then I got over it, also I felt that I had grown up" (S.5).*

Following with lower frequency are feelings of shyness or fear:

*"I was quite shy but then I got used to it" (S.11). "Anxious about my parents' reactions, anxiety and fear" (S.16).*

Regarding the 3rd Theme: "What did you not like about the process?", the majority of students in both terms answer that they had no problem:

*"Nothing, everything was excellent" (S.8). "I didn't have any problem" (S.17).*

The issue that follows in students' statements in both terms relates to writing the presentation script:

*"That I had to spend a lot of time writing the script" (S.12). "...that afterwards we had to write it out neatly" (S.11).*

It is worth noting that a number of children, on the issue of "what did you not like", chose to reflect on their own student behaviour:

*"I don't like that I had many difficulties" (S.6). "What I didn't like at all is that I couldn't find an example where I could prove why I am not doing well or the opposite" (S.13).*

Regarding the 4th Theme: "What would you change in the process?", in both terms, the majority of children state that they would not change anything:

*"I wouldn't change anything" (S.9). "The process was perfect and I don't want anything to change" (S.3).*

Following is the topic of scriptwriting, with suggestions being offered:

*"To only say it orally" (S.4). "I would write a shorter script" (S.12). "To do it with the help of computers" (S.16).*

In this theme as well, in both terms, some children choose to reflect on their student behaviour and state what they would like to change on a personal level:

*"To organise my work a little better because I couldn't find my worksheets" (S.15). "To be diligent and responsible for my work" (S.13). "Not to get stuck on my words" (S.6).*

The discussion of conclusions, research limitations, and proposals follows.

### **Discussion - Conclusions**

From the quantitative results of the present action research, it was ascertained that the children of the specific class maintain a consistently positive perception, over time, regarding the impact of SLCs on both their motivation for learning and their sense of personal responsibility for learning. Specifically, stability was observed in students' responses across both variables, "Motivation" and "Responsibility". This fact can be interpreted as an indication that SLCs were not evaluated by the children with the temporary enthusiasm that usually accompanies the introduction of an innovation, but rather maintained the position of a consistently positive pedagogical practice in their consciousness. This view is reinforced by the high medians for both variables in both administrations of the questionnaire (Motivation: Term 1 Mdn=4.67, Term 3 Mdn=4.50 Responsibility: Term 1 Mdn=4.5, Term 3 Mdn=4.5). This element indicates that the majority of students positioned themselves at the upper end of the scale regarding the impact of SLCs. This finding is consistent with research highlighting that when students have the opportunity to explain their goals and progress—as occurs in SLCs—both motivation and their personal sense of responsibility for learning increase, as through

such processes they are called upon to reflect on how they learn and to take initiatives for the improvement of their learning (Fuge, 2018; Gay, 2011; Guyton & Fielstein, 1989; Marquardt, 2003; Pihlgren, 2013).

The qualitative results reinforce the quantitative findings, demonstrating that children experienced the SLCs method as a process that strengthened their autonomy and sense of responsibility. The frequent reference to the phrase "*we speak to parents about our progress*" suggests that children perceived themselves as active agents of the learning process. Moreover, the shift in the third term towards statements concerning their self-awareness and self-assessment indicates that, with the passage of time, students moved from initial enthusiasm to a more mature, reflective attitude towards learning. Additionally, the students' references to the connection with their parents confirm the satisfaction of the need for Relatedness, the third pillar of Self-Determination Theory. The process appeared to strengthen the social bond, as students felt supported and understood by the significant adults in their lives. Other relevant studies reach similar conclusions (Avdelli & Giannakopoulou, 2024; Gay, 2011; Hackmann, 1996; Marquardt, 2003).

Correspondingly, regarding the theme "How did you feel?", the coexistence of anxiety and joy/pride reveals that the process constituted a challenge with a positive connotation: the anxiety of exposure was gradually transformed into satisfaction and a sense of personal growth ("*I felt that I had grown up*"). This aligns with the literature, where similar studies observe the development of identical or similar emotions, a fact indicating that assuming a presentation role enhances students' self-confidence and self-regulation (Avdelli & Giannakopoulou, 2024; Gay, 2011; McGloin, 2022; Tuinstra & Hiatt-Michael, 2004).

Regarding the questions on what they did not like or what they would change to improve the method, the majority stated "no problem" or "I wouldn't change anything", which demonstrates a high degree of acceptance of the method. The few criticisms mainly concerned technical issues (e.g., excessive writing, lack of time for scriptwriting), which appear to emerge in similar studies abroad as well (Tuinstra & Hiatt-Michael, 2004). An interesting finding is the appearance of statements of personal self-criticism ("*I struggled to find examples*", "*to be more responsible*"), which highlights the development of critical self-awareness and metacognitive skills. This element connects with the quantitative data that showed consistently high values for responsibility, as well as the qualitative elements of the first theme that indicated students' disposition for self-assessment. Consequently, it could be argued that SLCs in this specific context appeared to function as a factor encouraging not only the presentation but also the reflection on the processes students follow to learn (Fuge, 2018; Pihlgren, 2013).

Overall, it appears that students evaluated SLCs as a positive experience that helped them take initiatives, reflect on their successes and difficulties, and experience learning as a personal process.

The limitations of the present study and proposals for future research on the issue of SLCs follow.

#### *Limitations and Proposals for Future Research*

The present study provided significant evidence regarding the impact of the "Student-Led Conference" (SLC) method on the motivation and personal sense of responsibility (accountability) for learning among 6th-grade students in a Greek urban Primary School. However, we are cognizant of the fact that it was conducted as action research within a specific context and with a small sample size; consequently, there are limitations that must be taken into consideration when interpreting the results.

Specifically, the small number of participants does not allow for the generalisability of findings to a broader student population. Furthermore, the fact that the class teacher functioned as the researcher may have influenced the students' behaviour, who might have formulated responses that were more positive than they actually felt (social desirability bias).

Finally, the instrument utilised was designed for the needs of this specific action research and has not been extensively tested regarding its psychometric reliability and validity. However, it was deemed appropriate for capturing the students' views and lived experiences within the specific context.

Despite these limitations, the research highlighted useful conclusions regarding the pedagogical value of SLCs, which are in agreement with other international studies. Thus, we consider that prospects open up for further study within the Greek educational context. Future research could:

- be conducted with a larger sample of students and across more schools, to enhance the potential for generalisability,
- investigate the long-term impact of the method on the development of self-regulation and critical self-awareness skills,
- utilise psychometrically validated tools to measure motivation and responsibility,
- study the contribution of the method across different age levels and learning environments.

In this way, it will be possible to strengthen the documentation of SLC effectiveness and to utilise the results within the broader Greek educational framework.

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