

**AILA 13<sup>th</sup> World Congress of Applied Linguistics, Singapore**  
**Business Meeting of AILA SC on Learner Autonomy**  
**Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> December, 2002**

Approximately 30 members attended the 2002 Business Meeting of the AILA Scientific Commission (SC) on Learner Autonomy, which was chaired by Sara Cotterall and Bill Savage (co-convenors of the SC).

Apologies: Ana Maria Barcelos, Leni Dam (co-convenor of the SC), Anita Wenden

Present: Phil Benson, Sara Cotterall, David Crabbe, Sada Daoud, Adri Elsen, Edith Esch, Vera Fernandes, David Hall, Bill La Ganza, Terry Lamb, Marie Linnet, Helene Martinez, Laura Miccoli, Tomoko Nakamura, Christine Nicolaides, Christine O'Leary, Richard Pemberton, Hayo Reinders, Zakia Sarwar, Bill Savage, Jonathan Shaw, Sarah Toogood, Turid Trebbi, Kees van Esch, Peter Voller, Gong Wengao, Jean Young

### **1. Adoption of Revised Aims of the Scientific Commission**

Sara Cotterall reminded the meeting that at the 1999 AILA SC Business Meeting in Tokyo, Naoko Aoki, Jonathan Shaw and David Crabbe had been asked to produce a revised statement of aims and objectives for the Scientific Commission in order to better reflect its broad, unchanging purpose. Members had been sent a copy of the revised statement of aims in March 2000 and invited to contact one of the SC convenors with suggested modifications. The revised aims and objectives of the Scientific Commission appear below:

#### *Purpose*

The AILA Scientific Commission on Learner Autonomy is established to advance understanding of the role of learner autonomy in successful language learning.

#### *Aims*

The aim of the Commission is to promote research and disseminate findings on:

1. the nature of learner autonomy
2. the conditions under which learner autonomy develops in individuals
3. processes by which teachers or advisors might encourage or enhance learner autonomy in specific learning contexts

#### *Objectives*

The objectives of the Commission are:

1. To maintain a database of its members and the research projects undertaken by them and other researchers
2. To maintain a website and a bibliography of material related to learner autonomy
3. To prepare an annual newsletter
4. To hold forums at the International Congress of AILA and at other appropriate times in which research is presented and discussed.

There was some discussion of the definition of the terms “autonomy” and “teacher autonomy” and the question was raised as to whether explicit reference should be made to “teacher autonomy” in the statement of aims. Bill Savage pointed out that while teacher autonomy had been the focus of the 2002 Symposium, it was not the main focus of the Scientific Commission. The meeting then formally endorsed the revised aims and objectives.

## **2. Election of New Convenors**

Sara Cotterall presented the background to the election of the new convenors, reminding those present that two of the three current co-convenors – Leni Dam and herself – were completing their second term, and the third – Bill Savage – was no longer available. Three nominations for new convenors had been received: Ana Maria Barcelos, Terry Lamb and Richard Pemberton. SC members had subsequently been invited to submit electronic or secret ballot postal votes for their two preferred candidates during the second half of 2002. (Ana Maria Barcelos was unable to attend AILA 2002, but Terry and Richard were present.) Sara reported that a number of electronic and postal votes had been received. The postal votes had been opened and counted by Bill and Sara earlier in the week and added to the electronic votes.

Those present were reminded of the responsibilities of the convenors. In the past, these have included:

1. Maintaining the membership database
2. Producing an annual newsletter
3. Organizing the symposium for the AILA Congress (not always a convenor responsibility)
4. Liaising with the AILA executive
5. Maintaining the SC website
6. Programming for AUTO-L
7. Arranging for the publication of the Symposium papers (not always a convenor responsibility)
8. Maintaining the LAPI

It was pointed out that not all these tasks are necessarily the responsibility of the convenors. Convenors are free to invite other members to take on these tasks, thus enhancing membership involvement in the SC.

Peter Voller proposed that all three candidates be elected as convenors. Bill Savage confirmed that it was acceptable to have three rather than two convenors, even though there had been only two convenors (1993-1999) until the current slate (Bill, Leni and Sara). Edith Esch commented that in her experience it was more practical to have three convenors than two, particularly to help share the responsibilities if one convenor was obliged to drop out. Jonathan Shaw then seconded the proposal and the motion was passed unanimously. Bill Savage announced that all three candidates had been elected as the new SC convenors for the period 2002-2005, and invited Terry Lamb ([T.Lamb@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:T.Lamb@sheffield.ac.uk)) and Richard Pemberton ([lcrpem@ust.hk](mailto:lcrpem@ust.hk)) back into the room where they were greeted by a round of applause. Sara Cotterall undertook to inform Ana Maria Barcelos ([barcelosam@hotmail.com](mailto:barcelosam@hotmail.com)) of the good news.

### **3. Proposal to Publish Symposium Papers**

Terry Lamb reported that he was confident of being able to publish the Symposium papers, and indicated that he and Bill Savage, as the Symposium organisers, were happy to assume responsibility for this.

### **4. Collaborative Research**

Terry Lamb spoke of his commitment to collaborative research and suggested a number of means by which it could be encouraged. In the discussion which followed, a number of ideas were proposed. These included reactivating the LAPI (Learner Autonomy Project Inventory), using AUTO-L to share information on research funding opportunities, publishing research from PhD dissertations on learner autonomy and identifying sources of research funding that are supportive of collaborative ventures. Christine Nicolaides then inquired whether it might be possible for all AILA Congress papers related to learner autonomy to appear together somewhere, recognising that a number of papers on learner autonomy had been presented elsewhere at the AILA Congress. Bill Savage responded positively by saying that in their role as Symposium organisers, he and Terry Lamb had been involved in selecting AILA congress papers on the topic of learner autonomy, and were therefore committed to being inclusive of any papers on learner autonomy in forthcoming publications or as postings on the Scientific Commission website.

### **5. Other SC Activities**

Members of the Scientific Commission were encouraged to maintain the profile of the SC in years where there was no AILA Congress, by participating in regional conferences and making reference to the existence of the SC. Two 2003 conferences were brought to the attention of those present. These include the Language Centre conference at the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology June 24-28, 2003 (see <http://lc.ust.hk/~centre/lcconf.html> for more information), and the Independent Language Learning conference to be held in Melbourne September 13-14, 2003 (see <http://www.independentlearning.org/> for more information).

### **6. Other Business**

It was suggested that other organisations, such as HASALD (Hong Kong Association of Self Access Learning Development) might wish to become affiliated with the SC to their mutual benefit.

The meeting concluded with a vote of thanks to the outgoing convenors.