

# LEARNER AUTONOMY IN LANGUAGE LEARNING (LALL)

Newsletter of the Scientific Commission on Learner Autonomy

Anita L. Wenden, Editor

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## MESSAGE FROM SC CONVENORS

Anita Wenden and Leslie Dickinson

In our first newsletter, we described the projects the SC would take on for the next three years. This newsletter will give you an update on each one and once again ask your participation. This time the newsletter is being sent e-mail as well as 'snail mail'. We hope that each of you who receives it will print it out and distribute it to interested colleagues in your area. **WE NEED TO INFORM OTHER COLLEAGUES ABOUT OUR COMMISSION AND YOUR PARTICIPATION IS ESSENTIAL.**

## MEMBERSHIP

We are including the membership registration form once again. Even if you completed the survey distributed at AILA, we are asking all of you--those who did not respond last year and those who are receiving the newsletter for the first time this year--to complete it and return it if you wish to remain on our mailing list for future newsletters and our mini publications.

## JOINING THE INFORMATION HIGHWAY

In reviewing the suggestions provided on the AILA surveys, we note that networking and the sharing of information is a priority of the membership. An annual newsletter and the LAPI series (see below) are barely a beginning. We need to take advantage of electronic communication. For example 'Lists', as many of you will know, can be created for educators and researchers interested in a particular topic. They allow participants to address theory/practice, research & experience in an open unmoderated forum. It is an opportunity to meet with others working in the same and/or related areas.

If you are familiar with setting up lists and other forms of electronic communication and/or would like to do research on how our SC members can use the information highway to network, please contact Anita or Leslie.

## UPDATE ON LALL PROJECTS

### LEARNER AUTONOMY PROJECT INVENTORY (LAPI)

The idea of the inventory came from our Amsterdam meeting and the surveys you completed. Many voiced the need to establish a data base of the research and/or classroom implementation that is being done.

So far ten people have responded to the request for information. These project descriptions will be available for distribution in LAPI 1 some time in August. Lists of the project titles and objectives will also be available. If you are interested in receiving a copy electronically or by regular mail, order one from Anita Wenden. If you do not have e-mail, you will be asked to send \$5US to cover the cost of printing and mailing since we do not have funds.

Those of you who have not yet responded to our call for projects are **STRONGLY URGED** to do so. We would like to make LAPI 1 the first of a series of LALL 'mini publications' and the beginning of our data bank. Use the categories below to write up your project: research, classroom learner training, evaluation...

### LEARNER AUTONOMY PROJECT INVENTORY (LAPI)

PERSONAL DATA (name, mailing address, telephone, fax, e-mail)

PROJECT TITLE & TYPE (e.g. research, classroom materials...)

LEARNER GROUP (proficiency, language being learned, age group)

PROJECT OBJECTIVE(s) (list specific objectives & how these are related to autonomy, language skill involved and/or learner need as relevant)

PROJECT DESCRIPTION (If research, describe briefly, (1) how you collected your data and (2) what the outcomes were. If it is classroom implementation describe your materials, tasks, outcomes. Of course it's also possible to describe a work in progress.

#### SYSTEM SPECIAL ISSUE ON AUTONOMY

Thanks to all who submitted abstracts. We were sorry that we could not include all of them and invite those authors whose abstracts were not selected to contribute them to LAPI, the Learner Project Inventory. In this way it can be shared with our membership.

The issue on autonomy is due for publication May 1995, SYSTEM 23 (2). Here we include a brief description and a table of contents. Offprints of specific articles may be obtained from individual authors.

#### GENERAL OVERVIEW

The papers can be divided into three categories: four review relevant literature and/or analyse concepts central to autonomy; two present the results of empirical research into aspects of learning relevant to autonomy, and two describe ways of developing autonomy through particular pedagogical approaches.

Gremmo/Riley provide us a retrospective view of the field. However, the themes that are the focus of discussion in one or more of the other papers chart NEW directions for future research and practice: the relationship between autonomy and enhanced learning (Dickinson, Little); the importance of metacognitive knowledge (Wenden, Cotterall, Victori/Lockart) and the role of learning setting (White, Ho/Crookall) and of the teacher (Little, White, Ho/Crookall).

#### CONTENTS

- 1 Autonomy, self-direction and self access in language teaching and learning: the history of an idea [MARIE JOSE GREMMO & PHILIP RILEY]
- 2 Autonomy and motivation: a literature review [LESLIE DICKINSON]
- 3 Learning as dialogue: the dependence of learner autonomy on teacher autonomy (DAVID LITTLE)
- 4 Learner training in context: a task-based approach to promoting autonomy (ANITA WENDEN)
- 5 Readiness for autonomy: investigating learner beliefs (SARA COTTERALL)
- 6 Autonomy and strategy use in distance foreign language learning: research findings (CYNTHIA WHITE)
- 7 Enhancing metacognition in self-directed learning [MIA VICTORI & WALTER LOCKART]
- 8 Breaking with Chinese cultural traditions: Learner autonomy in English language teaching [Judy Ho & David Crookall]

#### **AILA '96**

The AILA '96 congress will be held in Jyväskylä, Finland, 4 - 9 August, 1996. The theme is Applied Linguistics across the Disciplines. If you have not received a copy of their second circular, write to AILA '96 Secretariat Ms Taru-Maija Heilala Jyväskylä Congresses PO Box 35 FIN - 40351 JYVASKYLA, FINLAND. fAX: 358 41 603 621. E-mail: internet:heilala@jyu.fi OR sajavaar@tukki.jyu.fi

The structure of the '96 congress will be somewhat different from that of past congresses. The organizers are emphasizing participation and will structure the Congress according to the following categories of activities: an opening and closing plenary, symposia, open fora, special sessions and papers (to be presented in poster form) and paper-review sessions.

The organizing committee sent advance circulars to scientific Commissions last May, asking for proposals in line with their structure.