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## 21

## Teacher development for learner autonomy: images and issues from five projects

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### 1 Introduction

“Like the artisans who construct a building from blueprints, bricks, and mortar, scientists contribute to a common edifice called knowledge. Theorists provide the blueprints and researchers collect the data that are the bricks.

To extend the analogy further, we might say that research synthesists are the bricklayers and hod carriers of the science guild. It is their job to stack the bricks according to plan and apply the mortar that holds the structure together.” (Cooper & Hedges 1994: 4)

In the field of learner autonomy in language education, theorists and researchers have provided us with various “blueprints” and “bricks” that can help us understand the rationale and implications of pedagogy for autonomy. Yet, there have not been many attempts to “stick the bricks according to plan and apply the mortar that holds the structure together”. A significant exception is Benson’s (2001) review, which highlights the conceptual and methodological diversity in the field, as well as the need to further investigate the effectiveness of different practices.

One of the approaches identified in the literature is what Benson calls

"teacher-based", where the emphasis is on professional development as a path to promote learner autonomy. However, as the author concludes, accounts of teacher education programmes directed at learner autonomy are scarce and we do not know much about their effectiveness (op. cit.: 176). In fact we might say that, despite the rise to prominence of learner autonomy as an educational goal in language education in Europe, and even though the need for appropriate teacher education programmes is widely acknowledged, the dearth of research on teacher development for learner autonomy (TDLA) is remarkable. This is the justification for this chapter, where we propose to take a close look at five TDLA projects conducted in four different European countries (Sweden, Portugal, Finland and Ireland), so as to uncover images of teacher development, learner autonomy and research that emerge from publications on those projects. Rather than describing each project, our purpose is to raise critical issues that emerge from a comparative analysis, so as open up the debate on the interplay of teacher development (TD) and learner autonomy (LA). Our approach is thus interpretative and exploratory.

We are aware of the shortcomings and constraints inherent in our task. Going back to Cooper and Hedges' analogy, we do not dare to see ourselves as "bricklayers and hod carriers of the science guild". As they suggest, this is a highly complex task as theory blueprints and data bricks seldom fall into neat "categories" or "structures". We would rather see ourselves as critical inquirers, seeking to problematize TDLA rather than reaching definite conclusions.

## 2 Methodology

We looked for candidate studies by searching databases, examining reference lists and reports, reviewing prominent books and journals, and consulting colleagues. The domain of our review was published research on TDLA projects in Europe over the past two decades (1985–2005), that met the following criteria:

- Clear articulation between TD and LA
- Involvement of teachers (or student teachers) in pedagogical inquiry
- Empirical evidence of project impact (on teachers and/or learners)

- Significance in terms of length and type of approach

Apart from problems related to availability and language of publication, we are aware that a lot of research, especially that which is conducted for academic purposes in postgraduate education, is often not published internationally, which leaves it largely unnoticed. Furthermore, differences in type and length of publication (e.g. report vs. conference paper) have implications for their style and information load, which surely affects interpretation.

Bearing these limitations in mind, we analysed 12 publications (see Appendix 1) on five TDLA projects that met all our criteria:

### *Differentiation in the Teaching of English (Diff-Eng)*

[R. Eriksson (in collaboration with J. Miliander); Sweden, 1988–1990]

In-service teacher development for communicative language teaching and self-directed learning as an approach to individualization

### *Pedagogy for autonomy: a project in professional development and pedagogical experimentation*

[F. Vieira, G. Branco, M. A. Moreira; Portugal, 1993–96]

In-service reflective teacher development towards pedagogy for autonomy through action research

### *Action research as a strategy for reflective student teacher development*

[F. Vieira, M.A. Moreira, I. Barbosa, M. Paiva, I.S. Fernandes; Portugal, since 1995]

Pre-service reflective teacher development towards pedagogy for autonomy through action research

### *Learner, curriculum and cultural change – OK School Development Project (OK Project)*

[V. Kohonen, P. Kaikkonen; Finland, 1994–98]

In-service teacher development for a collegial school culture and learner autonomy



*Learner Autonomy Project*

[D. Little, J. Ridley, E. Ushioda; Ireland, 1997–2001]

In-service teacher development for promoting communicative proficiency through an autonomy-based approach

These projects were all set up and evaluated by academic teacher educators/researchers (TE/Rs), and all the publications consulted were written by them. Information on the projects is briefly presented in Appendix 2.

We started by summarizing each project in a grid that included the parameters indicated in Table 1. We then took a more critical look at the projects, taking into consideration two conceptual frameworks related to reflective teacher education and pedagogical research:

- Dimensions of inquiry-oriented teacher education (Tom 1985): arena of the problematic, model of inquiry, and ontological status of educational phenomena;
- Typology of data gathering and data-analysis procedures in pedagogical research (adapted from Freeman 1996).

This second stage of analysis helped us uncover images of teacher development, learner autonomy and research within the projects, and identify critical issues that may be relevant as we envisage further directions for (research into) TDLA.

We now proceed to a presentation of main conclusions from our

<i>TDLA Project Context</i>	Title/ theme Setting (place and time) Participants and role of teacher educators/researchers
<i>TDLA Project Description</i>	Focus and goals Conceptual/ ethical framework (assumptions and principles) Teacher development strategies Research strategies and types of data Gains, shortcomings, and constraints Implications and recommendations
<i>Critical Issues</i>	Issues raised by TE/Rs Issues raised by us (from our interpretation of projects)

**Table 1**  
Parameters for project summary

analysis. Projects will be hereafter identified by the initial letters of the corresponding countries (e.g. SP – Swedish Project).

### 3 Images of teacher development and learner autonomy

The complexity of teaching as characterized by the individuality of students, the dynamic nature of classroom interactions and the demand for innovation defies any claim that teachers may be *simply implementers of something that gains its legitimacy elsewhere* (Grundy 1998: 31)

All the projects put a significant emphasis on the role of the teachers as reflective practitioners, pedagogical inquirers and agents of change. However, not all authors clarify their position as regards *inquiry-oriented teacher education*, which can take several meanings and be translated into different practices, with different outcomes.

Tom (1985) proposes three dimensions that can be used to distinguish between alternative approaches to inquiry-oriented teacher education: the arena of the problematic, the model of teacher inquiry, and the ontological status of educational phenomena. He represents these dimensions along three interrelated continua as in Table 2, and while admitting that moving towards the right pole of the continua is difficult, he also assumes that it is crucial for fostering critical change.

We can say that all the five projects presuppose that educational phenomena are socially constructed, since they are all based on classroom inquiry as a means to transform the conditions of teaching and learning so as to enhance teacher and learner growth. However, looking at the arena of the problematic and the model of inquiry will help us identify variations and shortcomings as regards Tom's continua above.

What is rendered problematic in the projects under review is primarily the process of teaching and learning (narrow scope), although broader issues are sometimes raised about the school culture (values, discourses, and practices), curriculum development, university-school partnerships, community development, and the emancipatory potential of teacher edu-

<i>Arena of the problematic (comprehensiveness)</i>	Teaching-learning process	Subject matter knowledge	Political/ethical principles underlying teaching	Society, including educational institutions
	← Small arena of the problematic		Large arena of the problematic →	
<i>Model of inquiry (scope and rigour)</i>	Knowledge achieved through commonsense inquiry  (narrow scope, low rigour)	Knowledge achieved through disciplined inquiry  (narrow scope, high rigour)	Linkage of knowledge and action through commonsense inquiry  (broad scope, low rigour)	Linkage of knowledge and action through disciplined inquiry  (broad scope, high rigour)
	← Low guidance for teacher educator		High guidance for teacher educator →	
<i>Ontological status of educational phenomena (rationales and related focal points for inquiry)</i>	Lawlike outcomes Generalizations	Context/time sensitive generalizations	Ongoing inquiry into classroom events	Political and ethical principles of teaching A just society
	← Educational phenomena as natural		Educational phenomena as socially constructed →	

**Table 2**  
Dimensions of inquiry-oriented teacher education (based on Tom 1985)

cation (particularly in PP2 and FP). What is not always clear, however, is the role played by teachers in raising and problematizing these issues, as the TE/Rs' theoretical background and ideological stances seem to play a decisive role in defining *what* is rendered problematic. This normative orientation is also evident in the establishment of pre-defined principles that are intended to guide pedagogical action, the extensive use of lectures and workshops led by the TE/Rs themselves or invited experts, or the clear-cut distinction between pedagogical and research objectives, which often entails a differentiation of roles in data collection and analysis (these three aspects are particularly evident in SP and IP). We can thus say that all projects combine top-down and bottom-up approaches to pedagogical innovation, although the relative weight of each varies across projects. This issue is explicitly raised by the researchers of PP2: *can the normative nature of teacher education be articulated with an emancipatory view of teacher*

*development?*

Another important aspect regarding the arena of the problematic is the way TE/Rs articulate teacher *and* learner autonomy, which seems to range from viewing teacher autonomy as a pedagogical means to promote learner autonomy to viewing teacher and learner autonomy as inseparable phenomena within a vision of education as empowerment and transformation. The second perspective is more clearly political as it problematizes the extent to which the values and ideologies of schooling favour democratic education. A related aspect concerns the primary status of LA as a means to develop communicative ability or an educational goal in itself. The former is more discipline-specific than the latter, which is especially evident in FP where a link between autonomy and cross-disciplinary values education is claimed. Again, we might say that this perspective is more politically-oriented in that it highlights the ideological nature of teaching and learning.

Nevertheless, even if conceptual variations exist, practical operationalizations of pedagogy for autonomy seem to reflect a rather narrow view of autonomy as a personal attribute and a condition for self-managed learning that involves the willingness and capacity to conduct one's own education (Candy 1991). For example, if we take Benson's (1997) "versions of autonomy" – technical, psychological and political –, we can say that the political dimension of LA, that is, control over the content and processes of one's own learning involving some kind of active engagement in social criticism and/or social change, is largely absent. Actually, the moral and political contours of LA *in practice* are seldom discussed or evidenced in the images we get from descriptions and examples of pedagogical experimentation in schools.

The common assumption that pedagogy for autonomy is flexible and context-sensitive is illustrated by the fact that these projects stress not only different aspects of LA – experiential and intercultural learning, self-direction, individualization, reflection, awareness, self-regulation and metacognition, negotiation and decision making, personal and social responsibility, empowerment, and communicative proficiency –, but also different pedagogical principles to enable LA. However, these differences of foci seem to result also from the fact that local choices are



largely determined by the TE/Rs' convictions and previous research. As we said before, they seem to play a decisive role in defining what is rendered problematic, and this means that diversity *within* each programme is lower than diversity *among* projects. Efforts to evaluate cross-context transferability are scarce, although one of the projects (IR) aimed to verify the feasibility of approaches developed in other countries.

As regards models of teacher inquiry, they are either characterized as "pedagogical experimentation" (SP and IP) or "action research" (PP1/2 and FP). Both entail the integration of knowledge and action, as well as some form of data collection and analysis, which means that results from inquiry can provide teacher educators with some guidance on what might best promote LA. However, it is difficult to say whether such inquiry is "commonsense" or "disciplined" (see table 2 above), especially because publications do not present detailed accounts of teacher action. On the other hand, we need to ask: What is a disciplined teacher researcher? In our view, it is not a teacher who replicates academic research procedures so as to become an expert in pedagogical research. It is rather a teacher who: (a) develops a critical understanding of education by inquiring into theories, practices and contexts; (b) develops action (research) plans whereby the paralysing effect of situational constraints is counteracted, the limits of freedom are challenged, and possibilities are explored; (c) realizes the importance of making choices and assuming responsibility, taking risks and being creative, managing tensions and dilemmas, dealing with ambiguity and uncertainty, negotiating and compromising; (d) engages in self-/co-evaluation of professional development processes and outcomes on the basis of locally relevant criteria; and (e) disseminates experiences and confronts his/her voice with other voices within the professional community, so as to contribute to the emergence of collective knowledge, language and practice (Vieira 2003).

The TDLA projects under review appear to presuppose this view of teacher research, but we would need more information on teacher inquiry processes to account for this interpretation. Publications in our *corpus* tend to emphasize a second level of inquiry, that is, research undertaken by the TE/Rs themselves so as to evaluate the impact of their programmes. We now move to images of this evaluative research, where

issues regarding the ontological status of educational phenomena will become more evident.

#### 4 Images of research into TDLA

In our interpretation of how TDLA programmes are evaluated, we will focus on methodological choices, the roles played by participants, and impact results. Before we start though, it must be said that our analysis is mostly tentative and speculative, as texts often lack detailed information on research issues (except for longer reports, as in the case of IP and SP). For example, paradigmatic orientations are seldom discussed, the rationale for research instruments is sometimes not clearly stated, research instruments are not always presented, and the procedures for data analysis are often only briefly explained.

##### 4.1 What counts as methodology and who does what

An overview of data gathering and analysis procedures used in the five TDLA projects is presented in Table 3, on the basis of categories adapted from Freeman (1996). Evaluative research undertaken in these studies is mostly second-order, thus acknowledging the ontological status of educational phenomena as social constructions. Data collection procedures are mostly *ex post facto* and data is basically indirect and internal, deriving from retrospective accounts from teachers and students in the form of reflective records/narratives, questionnaires, and interviews. Research strategies are strongly person-oriented, focussing on the socially-constructed, language-mediated meanings that teachers and, in some cases, students weave.

Second-order research typically uncovers and documents the participants' understandings of phenomena rather than the phenomena themselves (Freeman 1996). The problem as we see it is not whether what people *say* is what really *is* (reality is not out there to be objectively captured), but whether perceptions are enough to evaluate TDLA programmes. First-order and second-order data can be usefully triangulated so as to identify convergence or divergence between representations and practices (for e.g. in PP2 data from one supervisor discourse is compared to that supervisor's representations of her own discourse, in order to

1. How are data gathered?		SP	PP1	PP2	FP	IP
1.1 Data source: - real time  - ex post facto	Observation records/ field notes	✓		✓		✓
	Classroom discourse					
	Stimulated recall					
	Interaction in TD context (*)	✓		✓		✓
	Interviews (T)	✓			✓	✓
	Survey / questionnaires (T)	✓	✓	✓		
	Self-report/ reflective records (T)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Interviews (S)				✓	✓
	Survey / questionnaires (S)		✓	✓		✓
	Self-report/ reflective records (S)					✓
	Learning task analysis (S)					
	Documentary analysis			✓		
	1.2 Type & focus of data	Direct / external data on TD	✓		✓	
Indirect/ internal data on TD		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Direct / external data on LD						✓
Indirect/ internal data in LD			✓	✓	✓	✓
1.3 Relation of participants to data	Teacher-generated data	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Student-generated data		✓	✓	✓	✓
	Researcher-generated data	✓		✓		✓
2. How are data analysed?						
2.1 Analysis: researcher stance	Participatory (insider perspective)					
	Declarative (outsider perspective)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2.2 Analysis: categories/aspects	Grounded	✓		✓	✓	✓
	Negotiated (with teachers)					
	Guided/ a priori	✓	✓	✓		✓

T- Teachers; S - Students; TD- Teacher Development; LD - Learner Development  
Interaction in TD context (\*) - Eg. in supervisory conferences, training sessions, etc.

**Table 3**  
Data gathering and data analysis procedures (TDLA projects)

disclose potential biases in both researcher and supervisor interpretations).

Although the studies value context-sensitive action and understandings, it seems that they also aim at verifying the local validity of TE/Rs' hypotheses about how TDLA *can* be promoted, on the basis of their own previous research and convictions about how it *should* be promoted. This has implications for the foci of data collection and methods of data analysis, which seem to be largely determined by the TE/Rs' theoretical and/ or value frameworks. In other words, it is fundamentally the TE/Rs' agenda that determines what gets analysed and how, even when a collaborative stance is claimed. This reinforces our previous analysis of the prominent role of TE/Rs in determining what is rendered problematic within TDLA programmes.

A related issue is that, although TE/Rs assume a *participatory* stance as teacher educators, they tend to assume a *declarative* stance as researchers, since they are responsible for assembling and analysing information (from various sources, individuals, and contexts), and also for disseminating the projects. They often adopt a meta-perspective which obscures the singularity and richness of teachers' experience, though glimpses of it are provided in the form of samples from participants' discourse and practices. As a result, teachers' stories are often left untold.

Research into TDLA thus reveals a *role dichotomy* at several levels: teachers develop a scholarship of teaching and learning, whereas teacher educators/researchers develop primarily a scholarship of teacher education; data collection procedures are either proposed by researchers or negotiated with teachers, but never totally teacher-determined; teacher inquiry feeds back directly into researcher inquiry (through data collection), whereas the reverse is not so evident; while teachers evaluate their local practice and the impact of programmes on an individual basis, researchers tend to take a more global, meta-analytical, evaluative stance; finally, researchers assume major responsibility for data analysis and dissemination of findings, whereas teachers (and students) assume an active role in pedagogical experimentation and data-generation. In sum, we can say that the processes of inquiry involved in the production of knowledge within TDLA projects are asymmetrically distributed, and



the gains for teachers and researchers are differentiated. Although this is not necessarily negative, it does raise questions about the possibilities and limits of the *democratization* of educational inquiry.

#### 4.2 What results tell us about the impact of TDLA projects

The outcomes of the projects refer to both LA and TD, although the emphasis on one or the other may differ.

On the whole, TDLA seems to have a positive impact upon several aspects of learner autonomy, although all authors seem to agree that autonomy is a very complex phenomenon, both theoretically and practically, which limits our ability to 'measure' it. Major gains include involvement and responsibility, self-awareness, ability to reflect on learning and make learning decisions, use of target language, task management and self-regulation strategies, and cooperative learning. As far as teacher development is concerned, positive outcomes are indicated as regards the teachers' enhanced notion of professional competence and identity, self-knowledge, critical awareness of pedagogical choices, ability to deal with constraints, willingness and ability to inquire into practice, ability to promote and monitor learner development, and development of collegial relationships (within/among schools and with university TE/Rs). It seems, therefore, that TDLA programmes can have a significant impact upon learner *and* teacher empowerment, although the scope of that impact varies according to contextual variables and the particular foci of each programme.

There seems to be agreement that pedagogy for autonomy requires a never-ending commitment to the planning, monitoring and evaluation of practice, that is, the successful implementation of pedagogical principles over time depends on continuous questioning and experimentation. This connects with the idea that TDLA is a gradual process that is influenced by personal biographies and social environments. As illustrated in one of the projects (FP), the traditional emphasis of school on cognitive learning can be an impediment to LA, and the same can be said about students' ingrained beliefs and learning habits, which may explain discrepancies between teacher intention and learner perception. Situational constraints related to time and workload management, class size, traditional testing

systems, resistance from colleagues and students, different degrees of teacher involvement, and emotional aspects of change (e.g. feelings of uncertainty and insufficiency) are also pointed out. Two of the projects (SP and IP) further refer to the problem of teacher recruitment and dropouts in their programmes. Overall, it seems that research on contextual factors that may facilitate or hinder TDLA is crucial to understand teacher-based approaches to autonomy.

Our interpretation of results was largely determined by the information provided. We believe that more detailed information on the context and nature of teacher inquiry would allow readers to better judge the innovative potential of the projects and assess their transferability to similar settings. We also think that the studies make evident the need for further research that explores alternative designs, particularly as regards the triangulation of first- and second-order data, more detailed ethnographic accounts of teacher and learner development, and a greater involvement of teachers in evaluation procedures.

## 5 Future (emerging) directions

If we wish to live in a society enlightened about teaching and teacher education, we will need to look for those truths that have real consequences for teachers, students, and society and to find ways to shed the light of scholarship on many dark corners. (Shulman 2002: 253)

One of the most important features of the five TDLA projects reviewed is their *social relevance*, that is, they all aim at understanding and improving the quality of teachers' and students' lives through school-based inquiry.

We believe that critical pedagogical inquiry should empower teachers epistemologically and politically. This means that TDLA projects need to create opportunities for teachers to develop a sense of the complexity and uncertainty of educational situations, a stance of openness towards risk and ambiguity, and an ability to uncover and manage constraints through inquiry; it further implies that teachers play an active role in

defining research and pedagogical agendas, analysing data, and disseminating their experiments to large audiences through publications. Academics can invest more in supporting teacher-written narratives, assembling and editing them as case collections, thus providing the educational community with autobiographical accounts of how the processes of teacher and learner development unfold.

The shift from the still prevailing image of the teacher as consumer and technician to an expanded conception of the teacher as knower, thinker, inquirer and agent of change, has implications for the duration, content and design of TDLA programmes: long-term, autonomy-based, inquiry-oriented methodologies seem to have high potential to support teacher and learner growth as interdependent phenomena; collaboration among teachers and school-university partnerships also seem to enhance the emancipatory potential of programmes.

The projects show different degrees of success in encouraging change and innovation towards LA, since ideological and material conditions within teacher education institutions, schools, and societies may establish limits on the range of options available to both teachers and teacher educators (Zeichner & Gore 1990). Therefore, more research is needed to determine which factors account for teacher and learner resistance or commitment to autonomy as an educational goal. This might include disclosing the forces (institutional, political, economical ...) that undermine pedagogy for autonomy, interrogating their legitimacy, and creating niches of resistance that counteract their pernicious effects. For example, as one of the TE/Rs (FP) points out, although transformative learning requires time, professional effort and administrative support, these conditions are often counteracted by efficiency-oriented quality control mechanisms. It would also be important to investigate the social and psychological mechanisms inherent in change processes, which would help us adjust TDLA programmes to local contexts and assess their value and shortcomings more thoroughly. On the other hand, follow-up studies would allow us to assess the long-term effects of those programmes and get insights on what conditions enable sustainable change.

The fact that autonomy is a multidimensional construct and a developmental process, "an aspect of the teaching and learning process

that is ambiguous in terms of cause and effect", and therefore does not lend itself to conventional forms of empirical research (Benson 2003: 282), limits our ability to assess autonomy or the impact of teaching on autonomy development. Moreover, since school-based inquiry is always context-sensitive and idiosyncratic, our ability to generalize practical rules or principles for action is also limited. These factors necessarily affect the nature of research into TDLA, especially in terms of the relation between theory and practice: "We are, it seems, constantly looking for new ways of implementing the broad idea of autonomy, and each new way appears to add a little more to the meaning of the idea itself" (Benson 2003: 281). However, the trustworthiness of research into TDLA can be greatly enhanced through multi-case research and comparative studies. Furthermore, a multi-methodological research approach can be expected to provide a more encompassing picture of TD strategies for LA, thus maximizing the value of insights gained.

Finally, it is crucial that teacher educators inquire critically into their practices so as to understand and improve them. Developing a scholarship of teacher education is a requisite for reflective TDLA, and the projects here analysed are examples of what that scholarship may look like. They certainly "shed the light of scholarship on many dark corners" of the interplay of teacher development and learner autonomy, but they also reveal some dark corners of scholarship itself: Whose interests does it serve? Who controls the conditions for inquiry and innovation? Whose knowledge is validated? Whose voice is made public?... We believe that these kind of questions need to be more clearly addressed in studies of TDLA. Answers will often be ambiguous and uncomfortable, as is usually the case in critical inquiry, but only by pursuing them can we realize the emancipatory potential and limits of our choices as teacher educators.

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## Appendix 1 - List of consulted publications on the TDLA projects

## [Swedish Project - 1988-1990]

- Ericksson, Rigmor (1993). *Teaching language learning. In-service training for communicative teaching and self-directed learning in English as a foreign language*. Göteborg: Acta Universitatis Gothoburgensis (PhD dissertation, 218 pp.)

## [Portuguese Project 1 - 1993-1996]

- Vieira, Flávia (1999). Pedagogy for autonomy: teacher development and pedagogical experimentation. In S. Cotterall & D. Crabbe (eds), *Learner autonomy in language learning: Defining the field and effecting change - Bayreuth Contributions to Glottodidactics*, vol. 8. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 149-158.
- Vieira, Flávia (2000). Teacher development towards a pedagogy for autonomy in the foreign language classroom. In R. Ribé (ed.), *Developing learner autonomy in foreign language learning*. Barcelona: Universidade de Barcelona, 221-236.

## [Portuguese Project 2 - since 1995, ongoing]

- Moreira, Maria Alfredo; Vieira, Flávia & Marques, Isabel (1999). Pre-service teacher development through action research. *The Language Teacher*, JALT (The Japan Association for Language Teaching), 23(12): 15-18.
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[\*\*see also Vieira, Flávia & Moreira, Maria Alfredo in this volume]

## [Finnish Project - 1994-1998]

- Kohonen, Viljo & Kaikkonen, Pauli (1996). Exploring new ways of inservice teacher education: an action research project. *European Journal of Intercultural Studies*, 7(3): 42-59.
- Kohonen, Viljo & Kaikkonen, Pauli (2001) Towards a collegial school culture: fostering new teacher professionalism and student autonomy through an action research project. *Julkaisusääntö*, Nena and Richard (toim.), *Te rito o te Matauranga. Experiential learning for the new millennium*, vol. 2 ICEL 7<sup>th</sup> Conference proceedings, University of Auckland: James Hone Maori research Centre, 79-93.
- Kohonen, Viljo (2002). From isolation to interdependence in ELT - supporting teacher development through a school-university partnership. *Julkaisusääntö*, Edge, Julian (toim.), *Continuing professional development: some of our perspectives*, IATEFL Yearbook 2002. Eynsham: Information Press, 40-49.
- Kohonen, Viljo (2003) Student autonomy and teachers' professional growth: fostering a collegial culture in language teacher education. In D. Little, J. Ridley & E. Ushioda (eds), *Learner autonomy in the foreign language classroom: teacher, learner, curriculum, and assessment*. Dublin: Authentik, 147-159.

## [Irish Project - 1997-2001]

- Little, David; Ridley, Jennifer & Ushioda, Ema (2002). *Towards greater learner autonomy in the foreign language classroom*. Dublin: Authentik. (report 1997-2001, 162 pp.)

## Appendix 2 - Information on the TDLA projects

## Goals of the projects (excerpts from publications):

*Differentiation in the Teaching of English (Diff-Eng)*

"Teachers of English in mixed-ability classes in Swedish comprehensive compulsory schools have an urgent need to individualize their teaching. The Diff-Eng project is one in a series of projects aiming at the development and implementation of individualized language teaching. The view taken in this project is that individualization can be achieved through communicative language teaching combined with a certain degree of self-directed learning, i.e. students' active participation in the planning, monitoring and evaluation of their learning. This active learner role supports the development of communicative ability, which is the principal goal of language learning." (Eriksson 1993: iii)

*Pedagogy for autonomy: a project in professional development and pedagogical experimentation*

"The project Pedagogy for Autonomy tried to establish a link between teacher training and learner training, based on the assumption that reflective teaching and learner autonomy are perhaps like two sides of the same coin; you cannot have one without the other.

The aims of the project can be stated as follows:

- To foster the professional development of in-service EFL teachers within a reflective approach, through a program of psychological and methodological preparation for the implementation of a pedagogy for autonomy in the classroom.
- To foster the development of learner autonomy in EFL learning, through the implementation of action-research projects focussing on intrapersonal, interpersonal and process dimensions of language learning. The primary focus of the project was on teacher development within a reflective approach, with two main ingredients: reflection and experimentation." (Vieira 1999: 152)

*Action research as a strategy for reflective student teacher development*

"The assumption that inquiry is at the heart of pedagogy and professional development has greatly inspired our work with student teachers (...). As supervisors, we have tried to enhance reflective teacher development through inquiry into pedagogy for autonomy in schools. In doing so, we have also tried to promote our own development through inquiry into our practice as reflective teacher educators. Our project (...) aims at promoting our student teachers' critical reflectivity by helping them: problematize the contexts of teaching and teacher development; inquire into pedagogical theories and practices; promote learning-centred pedagogy; and value self-direction and collaboration in professional development. These aims are enacted through small-scale action research projects conducted by the student teachers in one of their classes." (Vieira et al. 2005, forthcoming)

*Learner, curriculum and culture change - OK School Development Project (OK Project)*

"Teachers' awareness of ethical issues and their commitment to the educational ethos of their school provide the context for student autonomy.

Enhancing autonomy underscores the need for a collegial school culture whereby teachers work together with the students (and the school's stakeholders) in order to develop the school as a collaborative learning community" (Kohonen 2003: 147)

"A central goal of the project was to enhance teachers' professional growth and socially responsible student learning by promoting a collegial school culture." (op. cit.: 148)

"The project aimed at developing instruction within an experiential learning approach emphasizing reflective, autonomous learning and intercultural learning" (op. cit.: 149)

*Learner Autonomy Project*

"(...) our theoretical concerns [related to autonomous language learning] have always taken as their starting point the practical reality of successful language learning environments. Increasingly, we felt challenged to explore how far the results achieved by colleagues in Denmark, Finland, Norway, and Spain could be replicated in Ireland, within the constraints imposed by official curricula and public examinations.

Our response to the challenge was the (...) Learner Autonomy Project, which had two complementary aims:

- To stimulate pedagogical experimentation in a number of second level French and German classrooms;
- to use various empirical means to explore the impact of this experimentation on teachers and learners. (Little et al. 2003: 1)

"It was founded on two complementary convictions: that good pedagogical practice requires good pedagogical theory, and that pedagogical experimentation and classroom research are like two sides of the same coin." (op. cit.: 23)

Project title & TDLA focus	Setting/Duration	Participants	Teacher development strategies	Data sources
<i>Differentiation in the Teaching of English (Diff-Eng)</i> In-service teacher development for communicative language teaching and self-directed learning as an approach to individualization	Sweden University of Karlstad 1988-1990	86 EFL teachers (18 abandoned) TE/R: Rigmor Eriksson (collaboration of June Millander as trainer in the programme)	Workshops, lectures, plenary sessions Pedagogical experimentation Exchange of experiences Teacher diaries	Questionnaires (T) Interviews (T) Classroom observation Group discussions (T) Diaries (T)
<i>Pedagogy for autonomy: a project in professional development and pedagogical experimentation</i> In-service reflective teacher development towards pedagogy for autonomy through action research	Portugal University of Minho 1993-1996	30 EFL teachers (30h course - year 1) 13 further developed action research projects TE/Rs: Flávia Vieira, Gracia Branco, Maria Alfredo Moreira	Plenary sessions Action research projects Exchange of experiences Teacher reflective reports	Questionnaires (T/S) Reflective reports (T)
<i>Action research as a strategy for reflective student teacher development</i> Pre-service reflective teacher development towards pedagogy for autonomy through action research	Portugal University of Minho Since 1995 (ongoing project)	About 40 FL (English or German) student teachers per year (in their practicum year) TE/Rs: Flávia Vieira, Gracia Branco, Maria Alfredo Moreira, Isabel Barbosa, Madalena Paiva, Isabel Sandra Fernandes	Plenary sessions Supervisory conferences Supervised action research projects Exchange of experiences Teacher portfolios	Questionnaires (T/S) Classroom observation Pre-/Post-observation conferences Portfolio (T)



<p><i>Learner, curriculum and culture change - OK School Development Project (OK Project)</i> In-service teacher development for a collegial school culture and learner autonomy</p>	<p>Finland Tampere University 1994-1998 (Year 1 - preparatory)</p>	<p>40 teachers from 6 schools (different school subjects, including FL) TE/Rs: Viljo Kohonen, Pauli Kaikkonen</p>	<p>Plenary sessions, workshops, seminars Site-based planning groups Action research projects Exchange of experiences Teacher portfolios and essays</p>	<p>Interviews (T/S) Reflective essays (T)</p>
<p><i>Learner Autonomy Project</i> In-service teacher development for promoting communicative proficiency through an autonomy-based approach</p>	<p>Ireland Trinity College Dublin 1997-2001 (Year 1 - preparatory)</p>	<p>20 FL (French and German) teachers over the 3 year empirical phase (not the same group all through the project) TE/Rs: David Little, Jennifer Ratley, Ema Ushioda (reference is made to Danièle Tort as a member of the research team, p. 37)</p>	<p>Seminars, workshops, lectures Pedagogical experimentation Exchange of experiences Teacher reflections and essays</p>	<p>Interviews (T/S) Questionnaires (S) Classroom observations Group discussions (T) Reflective essays (T)</p>

TE/Rs: Teacher Educators/ Researchers

T: Teacher

S: Student

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### Commentary on Section III

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In a climate of apparently ever-increasing *desire* for the promotion of language learner autonomy – at least as expressed within professional discourse – it is indeed remarkable, as Jiménez Raya and Vieira point out, that there have previously been so few accounts of practice and research in the area of pre-service or in-service teacher education for learner autonomy (TELA). The reports presented in this book therefore constitute a timely and valuable contribution to the development of a knowledge base for TELA, offering a variety of responses to Vieira's question in the Introduction: "How can language teacher education programmes promote the development of pedagogy for autonomy in schools?"

Whereas Vieira and Jiménez Raya and Vieira highlight the necessary local diversity of relevant practices and resist constructing a 'grand narrative', here I shall go against this grain and attempt a unifying commentary, offering some reflections on what can now be said *in general* about a possible knowledge base for TELA (see also Smith and Erdoğan, 2007). In making this attempt I concur with Little (2007: 15), who suggests that "a theory of language learner autonomy should tell us what it is necessary to do in order to develop autonomous language learners and users and at the same time provide us with criteria by which to evaluate our efforts".

Firstly, the authors of these reports, it is quite clear, are united in common *opposition* to forms of education as transmission/reproduction which still tend to be promoted if not in teacher education programmes themselves then via the *practicum* or other school socialization processes in their respective contexts. From a relatively constructivist perspective, they are all likely to agree with Miliander's sentiment: "I cannot see how

RAYA, Manuel Jiménez & VIEIRA, Isabel (2008). Teacher development for learner autonomy: images and issues from five projects. In M. Raya & T. Lamb (Eds.), *Pedagogy for Autonomy in Language Education: Theory, practice and teacher education*. Dublin: Authentik, pp.283-302.