

# A selected and annotated bibliography on autonomy in language learning

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## Introduction

Far from attempting to satisfy the specialist, the following bibliography is intended to provide a list of those primary sources that have been influential in shaping the current debate and practice on learner autonomy. While some of the books are mostly addressed to researchers in the field, the very practical nature of the topic dealt with in various of the references included here makes them easily accessible to teachers, advanced learners or school administrators interested in ways of developing autonomy in language learning.

Compiling this bibliography has been no easy task. Firstly, deciding the criteria for selecting the entries was crucial. An attempt has been made to balance the most representative works in each of the sections with publications that illustrate the kind of theoretical issues, research and applications that are covered in the area. Inevitably, this selection has also been determined by this author's accessibility to existing publications, which means that other important references published worldwide may be missing. Secondly, due to space limitations, all reference to individual articles or chapters has been excluded. Instead preference has been given throughout to whole books and to collections, series or published proceedings which offered a wealth of relevant contributions by different authors. Finally, fitting the references into the different major sections was also difficult since many of them covered to one degree or another the major areas of this field. Thus, the criterion for putting a reference into one section or another was determined by what area the reference gave most coverage to.

The first section contains essential references which provide an overview to the topic of *Autonomy and independence in language learning*. These are subdivided into books, series, collections and published proceedings. The references included in the second section evolve around the area of *Learner training*, as this is felt to be important for helping learners develop the necessary skills to become autonomous. While some of the major theoretical

principles involved in learner training will have inevitably been addressed in the preceding section (e.g., Dickinson, 1987; Wenden, 1991), the focus of the entries included here is on the particular skills and strategies learners need for self-directing their learning. Of the various applications of self-directed learning, learning through *Self-access* is increasingly gaining ground. Because of this, the third section, organized into books, series and collections, focuses exclusively on the organizing principles and the practicalities of setting-up and running self-access centers (SACs). Finally, an *Internet resources* section follows which includes a suggested list with professional associations, discussion lists, websites, email and newsletter addresses relevant to the area of autonomy in language learning.

## 1. Autonomy and independence in language learning

### 1.1. Books

Each of the three books included in this section has become a classic reference in the literature of autonomy and independence in language learning. They provide a foundation and an excellent overview to the field, making their reading obligatory for teachers, motivated adult learners or beginning researchers who want to be introduced to self-directed language learning.

HOLEC, H. (1979). *Autonomy and foreign language learning*. Council of Europe. Published in 1981 under the same title, Pergamon: Oxford.

As a founding member of CRAPEL, a renowned pioneering center in the fostering of autonomy in language learning, Henry Holec puts forward the theoretical basis and the pedagogical implications of learner autonomy, in what was originally a report commissioned by the Council of Europe. The report, which appeared later as a book under the same title, deserves special attention for it became a landmark for much subsequent research. In this volume, Holec starts off attempting to disentangle confusing terms, such as 'autonomy', 'self-directed learning' and 'individualized teaching', terms which he brings together in a diagram that shows the wide range of degrees and loci of self-direction. The responsibilities associated with an autonomous learner, that is, 'fixing objectives, defining the contents and progressions, selecting methods and techniques, monitoring and evaluating the acquisition process' are described in detail in the next chapter. These new responsibilities involve a shift in and a redefinition of the roles of learners and teachers, as well as new educational goals, all of which are outlined in the third chapter. The last part in this volume examines different projects which have already experimented with some form of self-directed learning, including the experiments at the University of Stirling (supplemented by an appendix which illustrates the self-elicitation instruments used), Bournemouth Eurocentre, The Study Circles in Sweden and those undertaken at CRAPEL, in France.

DICKINSON, L. (1987). *Self-instruction in language learning*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Published at a time in which not much research had yet been undertaken in the field, Dickinson's contribution puts together the premises, equally valid nowadays, of what self-instruction is, and provides a wealth of practical examples of how to implement it. The book is divided into two parts: following Holec, the first covers basic issues of self-instruction, starting with an analysis of the terminology that is used in this field. Several convincing arguments for self-instruction are then presented, including practical reasons, coping with individual differences, educational aims, motivation and learning how to become a successful language learner. The second part of this volume deserves special attention as it addresses practical issues of *how* to implement self-instruction systems, illustrated with exercise materials, case studies and preparation activities that teachers can apply in their own contexts. This part exemplifies seven of these systems: four at adult level and three at school level; it then examines the characteristics and types of self-study materials, as well as the kinds of support learners can receive to facilitate their learning, including the analysis of their needs and the development of learner contracts. The emerging importance of self-access centers is already evidenced in this volume, which devotes one chapter to examining those factors that need to be considered when setting up and running these types of centers. At the end of this volume, Dickinson takes up and further develops Holec's ideas on the need to provide teachers and learners with psychological and methodological preparation for self-instruction, and ends up with a final chapter intended to present a justification for and a characterization of self-assessment. The text is supplemented with various appendices that include useful exercises, instruments and suggestions for completing learner contracts, preparing teachers and learners, and fostering self-assessment.

WENDEN, A. (1991). *Learner strategies for learner autonomy*. London: Prentice Hall International.

Differing from Holec and Dickinson in their focus and approach, this volume explores, from a theoretical and a practical perspective, the areas of learners' strategies, attitude and beliefs as they relate to autonomy in language learning, and it does so by following an inductive task-based approach for teacher development. The book must be viewed, as the author herself puts it, 'as a set of resources for an autonomous seminar on learner autonomy' (p. 5), whereby by using learners' classroom accounts in the form of case studies, teachers' lesson plans, and data from the relevant literature, or by appealing to the teacher-reader's own experience, we are encouraged to analyze and criticize the points raised. The author's own commentaries on the tasks appear afterwards, which allow the reader to compare them with his/her own insights. Furthermore, the sequence in which the chapters are orga-

nized is also intended to gradually build up the teacher-reader's skills, starting with theoretical foundations about learner autonomy (chapter 1), learning strategies (chapter 2), beliefs (chapter 3) and attitudes about language learning (chapter 4), and then moving to more practical applications, such as syllabus design for learner training (chapter 5), getting information on students' learning processes (chapter 6), developing an action plan for strategic training (chapter 7), and changing belief systems and attitudes (chapter 8). Like the two previous books, the applicability of learner training is widely illustrated in the last chapter, which presents several programs that have been implemented in different settings worldwide for promoting learner autonomy.

### *1.2. The Authentik series on learner autonomy*

David Little is the editor of this series of books on learner autonomy published by Authentik (Dublin), and written by six well-known researchers in the field. Although each of these booklets, both small in length and in size, address different theoretical issues related to autonomy and self-directed learning, they are primarily intended to be practical guides for teachers. They present a range of practical examples drawn from a variety of contexts and language levels.

LITTLE, D. (1991). Learner autonomy 1: definitions, issues and problems.

DICKINSON, L. (1992). Learner autonomy 2: learner training for language learning.

DAM, L. (1995). Learner autonomy 3: from theory to classroom practice.

MCGARRY, D. (1995). Learner autonomy 4: the role of authentic texts.

USHIODA, E. (1996). Learner autonomy 5: the role of motivation.

RIDLEY, J. (1997). Learner autonomy 6: developing learners' thinking skills.

Little's book provides a general introduction to the area of learner autonomy, arguing for the importance of autonomy both as an educational goal and as a characteristic of successful language learning. Some of the main issues and problems related to the implementation of autonomous learning are also addressed. Leslie Dickinson presents background information, exemplifications and practical suggestions and techniques for implementing learner training, among them, self-control training, strategy training, self-assessment, and the enhancement of language and language learning awareness. Based on her life-long experience, Leni Dam shares her insights into the problems and successes she experienced in fostering learner autonomy of two groups of learners: beginners and intermediate in a school context. (For more details, see the book review in this issue). Dee McGarry advocates the use of authentic materials as a means of increasing students' motivation and promoting independent learning, and explores the practical issues involved in the implementation of such an approach. Ushioda draws on social and cognitive research findings into motivation as a general and educational goal to

explore the potential of motivational thinking as a way of developing learner autonomy. Processes such as modifying attributional causes, maintaining a positive self-concept, minimizing the impact of negative outcomes, or taking personal control of one's motivation are among those techniques suggested for learners to become self-motivated and more autonomous. The last book in this series, contributed by Ridley, analyzes the role played by the learners' conceptions and thought processes about the learning process and about themselves as learners in their development of autonomy. It then goes on to look at the interaction between those conceptions and the learners' language learning, and suggests pedagogical measures to help learners reflect over and monitor their learning.

### 1.3. Collections of articles

The overall interest in learner autonomy is reflected by the increasing number of collections that have been published, which bring together the views of various scholars in the field. While eclecticism is a feature that typically characterizes these types of publications, in most of the volumes included in this section, a balance has been met between articles that address theoretical concerns and which further expand the discussion initiated by the books described in the preceding section, those which focus on the practicalities of implementing self-directed learning (e.g., learner and teacher roles, the use of materials and technology, support systems), and those whose objective is primarily to provide an account of how autonomy has been implemented in their particular contexts. Altogether, an array of applications and settings are described, along with many practical suggestions which teachers will find easily transferable to their particular educational contexts.

GEDDES, M.; STURTRIDGE, G. (eds.). (1982). *Individualisation*. London: Modern English Publications, Macmillan.

With the title 'Individualization' the editors of this book have brought together different language learning approaches which have in common 'the learner as an individual... [who] is given greater responsibility for his learning' (p.1). Under this umbrella title, a variety of learning modes are included, ranging from one-to-one teaching, to individualized instruction, home-study, group work, self-directed learning and self-access learning. This variety is also seen in relation to the types of learners and educational contexts involved in the experiments described, among them, secondary schools, self-access centers and adult and third age courses. All of these learning modes and settings are presented in this twelve-chapter volume which examines several aspects of individualization, such as reasons for self-directed learning, teacher roles, self-study materials, storage and retrieval systems, classroom techniques for one-to-one teaching, and teacher training.

HOLEC, H. (ed.). (1988). *Autonomy and self-directed learning: present fields of application*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe.

This volume presents a compendium of reports on experiments carried out in various European countries whose ultimate objective was to examine the feasibility and conditions of fostering learner autonomy. These experiments were undertaken in various educational settings (secondary and tertiary institutions, adult education programs and teacher training courses), in different countries (Denmark, Belgium, France, Italy, Finland, Switzerland, Ireland and the United Kingdom) with learners of different levels (beginners and non-beginners), and with different second languages (French, English, German, Swedish), thus demonstrating the wide applicability of learner autonomy. Each of the 12 experiments reported here describes the particular objectives they pursued, their institutional context, the participants in the project, the activities and materials used and the conclusions they reached after the experiment. The practical nature of this compendium, commissioned by the Modern Languages Projects of the Council of Europe, makes it specially commended for those who are interested in implementing learner autonomy in their institutional context.

DICKINSON, L.; WENDEN, A. (guest editors). (1995). "Autonomy, self-direction and self-access in language teaching and learning: the history of an idea". *System*, 23 (2).

The nine papers which make up this collection "expand the discussion of learner autonomy into areas that either have not been studied in any detail or that have not been explicitly recognized as worthy of study at all" (p.149). Among those areas, there is the importance of metacognitive knowledge and learners' beliefs; the relationship between autonomy and motivation; the role of learning setting and of the teacher, and distance learning. Three are the areas into which the contributions can be categorized: the first group of papers provides a survey of the literature on autonomy, analyzing key concepts related to the field and discussing those circumstances under which autonomy may be promoted; the second set of papers describes the results of empirical research studies which aimed at fostering learner autonomy; finally, the last group of papers presents ways of implementing pedagogical approaches aimed at developing autonomy.

BROADY, E.; KENNING, M.M. (eds.). (1996). *Promoting learner autonomy in university language teaching*. London: Association for French Language Studies/CILT.

The 12 contributions in this collection of papers reflect the concerns of university language teachers for promoting learner autonomy in higher education. There are several issues raised in this volume: after the introductory chapter by the editors, who review the historical and intellectual background of learner autonomy in language teaching, the importance of social autonomy, defined as the "ability to function effectively as a cooperative member of

a group” (p. 16) is raised in the first two chapters. The next two highlight the need for adequate support in self-directed programs, and the differences between counseling and teaching are addressed in the following article on tandem learning. Information technology and its potential for promoting learner autonomy is the focus of the following three chapters. Finally, the three remaining papers in this volume move from the teacher’s perspective to examine learners’ views and attitudes about language learning. This collection confirms that fostering autonomy not only implies a change on the learner’s part but on the part of the teacher as well.

BENSON, P.; VOLLER, P. (eds.). (1997). *Autonomy and independence in language learning*. London: Longman.

This collection of papers makes an important contribution to the current debate about autonomy and independence in language learning. Featuring 17 chapters from key figures in the field, the main objective of the book is to bridge the gap between theory and practice in these areas, and it does so by providing a critique of the various ways of fostering autonomy in language learning. The introduction is also valuable in that it helps to clarify concepts related to autonomy that are often used interchangeably in the field. While the book aims at presenting different ‘versions of autonomy’ (p.3), one will note, however, that several of the contributions in this volume focus on one specific form of implementation: learning through self-access. This is divided into three parts, each of which addresses the following issues: the philosophy and practice of autonomy and independence; the changes in the roles of the teachers and learners, and finally, the methods and materials that contribute to overall goals. For a more detailed discussion of the contents in this volume see the book review section of this issue.

#### 1.4. *Published proceedings*

This section includes a selection of the proceedings or books that have been published based on papers presented at international conferences or symposiums on autonomy in language learning.

*Autonomy 2000: The development of learning independence in language learning*. Proceedings of the International Conference organised by King Mongkut’s Institute of Technology Thonburi (KMUTT) in association with The British Council, Bangkok, Thailand. November 20 – 22, 1996.

This volume offers a selection of the papers presented at the conference contributed by 22 researchers from all over the world. The selection includes papers that address theoretical and conceptual concerns as well as articles which exemplify the implementation of learner training in the classroom or in self-access systems. Besides the central theme of autonomy in L2 language learning, the other two themes which the contributions revolve around are

of particular interest: the importance of learners' knowledge and beliefs, and the issue of the cultural appropriateness of learner autonomy, with an emphasis on the educational systems in South East Asian countries. Learner autonomy is often associated with a "Western concept which is unsuited to Asian contexts with their different values and educational traditions" (Littlewood, this volume, p.124). How autonomy is implemented in such contexts becomes a central topic, and one worth considering, in several of the papers in this volume.

PEMBERTON, R., LI, E.S.L., OR, W.W.F.; PIERSON, H.D. (eds.). (1996). *Taking control: autonomy in language learning*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.

A welcome book which contains a collection of 18 papers that were presented by key researchers in the field at the international conference "Autonomy in Language Learning" in Hong Kong, in June 1994. In this volume, the editors, all of whom have been involved in the development of self-access centers in Hong Kong, strive to demonstrate that, given appropriate support, fostering learner autonomy within educational institutions is an achievable goal. Organized into five sections, the book deals with foundation concepts, the learner and the learning process, materials, technology and evaluation of learner autonomy. While theoretical perspectives are clearly addressed in each of those sections, it also provides a variety of examples on current practice, in classrooms and self-access centers, at secondary and tertiary levels and in other different cultural contexts.

CRABBE, D.; COTTERAL, S. (eds). (1999). *Learner autonomy in language learning: defining the field and effecting change*. Frankfurt: Peter Lang.

This is an edited collection of papers presented at the symposium on learner autonomy held at the 11<sup>th</sup> World Congress of Applied Linguistics in Jyväskylä, Finland, in August 1996. The papers were contributed by 21 researchers and practitioners in the field of learner autonomy from Asia, Australasia, Europe, Latin America and North America. The collection is divided into two sections. The first section - Defining the field - focuses on issues of definition. The second section - Implementing autonomy - discusses interventions aimed at fostering learner autonomy, and is subdivided into three sections: papers which report on working with groups of learners, those which discuss working with individual learners and those which focus on working with teachers.

LITTLE, D.; DAM, L.; TIMMER, J. (eds.). (2000). *Focus on learning rather than teaching? Why and how?* Dublin: Trinity College, Centre for Language and Communication Studies, in association with IATEFL.

This is an edited volume based on presentations and workshops given at the IATEFL Learner Independence SIG Conference in Krakow, in May



1998. It contains sixteen papers divided into five parts. The first part consists of three keynotes concerned with the theory of a learning-centered approach, its practice in the classroom, and its validation by empirical research; the second part contains five papers that illustrate the implementation of learner-centered and autonomous approaches in the classroom and elsewhere. Part three comprises four papers that report on research projects focussed on learners and their learning, and it deals with such issues as learners' awareness, goals and processes. Part four is concerned with teachers and teacher training; and part five addresses the topic of autonomy in the general curriculum.

## 2. Learner training

The first set of entries contained in this section includes references that are mostly addressed to learners interested in improving their language learning skills, yet not exclusively: the contents explored in these references, namely, about the nature, processes and strategies of language learning, may be equally useful for teacher development or for beginning researchers as well. On the other hand, the references listed in the second subset in this section<sup>1</sup> provide a more detailed account of the theory and research undertaken in the area of strategies and strategic training, their reading being more relevant for teachers and researchers in the field.

### 2.1 Books for learners

RUBIN, J.; THOMPSON, I. (1982). *How to be a more successful language learner*. Boston: Heinle & Heinle.

This is a highly commended book for learners who want to learn about language learning and about practical suggestions for becoming more successful and autonomous in their attempts to learn foreign languages. The book addresses complex issues about SLA, such as sociolinguistics, the socio-affective filter, acculturation, individual learning styles and variables, pragmatics, caretaker language, learner needs and learner-centered approaches in a manner which can be easily understood. The objective of the book, however, is not to present SLA theories; the first part aims at enhancing the reader's awareness about the nature of language learning, the communication process, and the influence of learner variables. This introduction is then complemented with the second part of the book, where cognitive and metacognitive strategies for improving this process are suggested, and with the third part, where more aids for the language learner are given, in how to

1. See also Dickinson (1992) and Wenden (1991) described in the first section of this bibliography.

optimize the use of resources, such as language teachers, textbooks, dictionaries, tapes and grammar references. Because of the themes dealt with and its potential pedagogical uses, the book is highly recommended for teacher development as well.

ELLIS, G.; SINCLAIR, B. (1989). *Learning to learn English: a course in learner training*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

A coursebook designed to enhance English learners' awareness about the strategies they use and to suggest others that may suit them better. As a course on strategic training, the book can be used to supplement existing course materials or as separate learner training sessions. To this end, a teacher's book which includes an introduction to the theory of learner training and a detailed guidance on using the materials is also available. The two parts which form this coursebook represent the two stages learners should follow in this training process: stage one contains activities designed to prepare learners for language learning, including their expectations, their learning styles, needs, organizational skills and motivation, and includes a unit which focuses on self-access learning. Stage two addresses the development of language learning strategies for each of the four skills as well as for grammar and vocabulary. Each unit follows a similar pattern: based on other students' experiences or on particular tasks, learners are encouraged to reflect about the nature of the skill under study and about their own learning approaches and preferences; they also learn how to build up their confidence, assess themselves, set short-term goals and organize their learning, and finally, explore a variety of different learning strategies. Particular suggestions for improving each skill are also provided, and useful charts for self-study, such as for recording one's needs, priorities, aims and progress, can be found in the appendix.

COHEN, A. D. (1990). *Language learning: insights for learners, teachers and researchers*. Boston: Heinle & Heinle.

An indispensable resource book for students, teachers and researchers intended to enhance their awareness about the nature and process of language learning and to suggest effective strategies for reading, writing, speaking, listening and vocabulary. Based on the author's own research as well as on empirical research studies, this nine-chapter volume includes a survey of language learning strategy research, which is linked to related issues of second language learning such as input / intake theory, individual differences, speech acts and foreigner talk, among others. Written in a very straightforward and accessible style, the first part of the book provides many practical suggestions and activities for enhancing the learning process and for implementing strategic training in the classroom. Whereas some chapters are purely informative, others place more demands on the readers, inviting them to actively participate in individual or group activities. Some strategies are presented induc-

tively, having the readers discover those they already use while performing certain tasks; others are preceded by a theoretical rationale. In the second part of the book, the studies alluded to in the preceding chapters are described in detail and an annotated 'further reading' section is included at the end of the chapters.

## 2.2. *Books for Teachers and Researchers*

WENDEN A. & RUBIN, J. (eds.). (1987). *Learner strategies in language learning*. London: Prentice Hall International.

A pioneering book which provides a useful introduction to the research literature in learning strategies, an area that had not been widely explored before the publication of this volume. Building up on the groundwork initiated by one of the editors of this volume, Joan Rubin, this collection of papers throws some light onto 'the strategies, beliefs and views of adult language learners and the influence of these strategies on their ways of learning' (p. xi). The 12 papers here revolve around three main areas. The first section presents a conceptual framework of learning strategies; specifically, it provides a survey of the literature on the field, a description and typology of strategies and a review on data collection methods. Part two examines research insights into strategies and strategy instruction derived from six different studies, including two which address learners' beliefs; and the last part illustrates practical ways of promoting learner autonomy by enhancing strategic training. The book should be of great value to both researchers in the field and teachers, who will find stimulating questions and suggestions for application at the end of each chapter.

O'MALLEY, J.M.; CHAMOT, A.U. (1990). *Learning strategies in second language acquisition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

A landmark in the field of learner strategies, the book lays the foundation for a theory that successfully integrates learning strategies with second language acquisition, and shows how such a theory can be useful for applications in this field. Because of this, this volume will be of interest for both applied linguists and educational researchers as well as for teacher trainers and language teachers who wish to apply research findings to their classroom situations. Based on the premise that 'language is a complex cognitive skill that can be described within the context of [Anderson's] cognitive theory' (p.1), in the first three chapters of this volume, the authors provide a thorough survey on learning strategies research and cognitive theory that shows the role that learning strategies play in the language acquisition process. This introduction is followed by a review of the strengths and weaknesses of the research methods used for collecting data on strategies (chapter 4) and by an illustration of several studies undertaken on this field (chapter 5). Of a more practical nature are the issues dealt with in chapter six, which focuses on strate-

gic training and on the variables that influence such training. An illustration of these practices can be found in the following chapter, which presents instructional models of strategic training in both first and second language contexts, and reference is made to materials for instruction on strategies. The last chapter provides a summary and basic conclusions of what is known in theory, research and practice in the field of learning strategies, which is followed by a useful glossary that describes many of the terms that have been mentioned throughout the book.

OXFORD, R. (1990). *Language learning strategies: what every teacher should know*. Rowley, Mass: Newbury House.

This book has become one of the most often cited references in the field of strategies, mainly because of SYLL (Strategy Inventory for Language Learning), a questionnaire<sup>2</sup> which provides L2 learners with a hands-on method to self-diagnose their language learning strategies. Along the lines of other researchers in the field, clearly influenced by insights from cognitive and humanist psychology, Oxford's strategy classification system, introduced in the first two chapters, differentiates between two main types of strategies: direct strategies 'for dealing with the new language' (p.14) and indirect strategies 'for general management' (p. 15). The first type of strategies encompasses cognitive, compensation and memory strategies, and within the second type, metacognitive, affective and social strategies are included. In chapters 3 and 5, extensive examples using different languages show how those strategies can be applied across language skills and tasks, which makes the book especially recommended for teachers interested in strategy training as well as for learners who want to improve their language learning skills.

COHEN, A. D. (1998). *Strategies in learning and using a second language*. Harlow, Essex: Longman.

A timely publication, this book explores the theme of learner strategies, by bringing together research findings and current discussions around the topic. The introductory chapter provides insightful coverage of several problematic issues that have arisen in the field of learning strategies: the need for clarifying what a 'strategy' and 'strategic competence' is; the distinction between 'strategy' and other related terms, such as 'tactic' and 'technique'; the absence of a consensus as to the conscious vs. unconscious nature of strategies; the different criteria used to classify language strategies; and the link between strategies and other personality-related variables. Chapter 3 focuses on the terminological distinction between language learning and language

2. It has been translated into several foreign languages, and used in more than 40 major studies, including a dozen dissertations and theses. For more details see Oxford, R. (1996). "Employing a questionnaire to assess the use of language learning strategies". *Applied Language Learning*, 7 (1&2): 25-45.

use strategies, and the following provides a useful discussion on the advantages and disadvantages of six methods used for investigating strategies, with a major focus on the use of verbal reports. A wide-ranging discussion of the various forms of strategic training, and the possible roles of teachers is provided in chapter 4, and a review of the literature on studies that have implemented strategic training is offered in the following one. Chapters 6 and 7 deserve special attention as they address two more specialized, and I might add, innovative areas: the language of thought chosen by the multilingual learner when faced with cognitive processing, and the strategies selected by learners for coping with language tests. At the end of each chapter stimulating questions and issues are raised for further discussion making the book suitable for language teachers and perhaps well motivated language learners who want to reflect on their use of strategies. However, the book's major focus on research findings and conceptual discussion around learning strategies makes it especially suitable for researchers with an advanced knowledge in the field. For a more detailed description, see the book review section of this issue.

### 3. Self-access learning

Most of the references included in this last section will be of great value to anyone concerned with self-access learning, from pre-service teacher trainees to experienced teachers and from managers of self-access centers to administrators concerned with financing self-access facilities. As with previous sections, the books listed in this first part, together with the series, provide an excellent overview to the topic. The entries included under 'collections' examine a variety of theoretical and practical issues on self-access learning, testifying to the wide range of possibilities within these types of centers.

#### 3.1 Books

SHEERIN, S. (1989). *Self-access*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Although technology has greatly advanced since the publication of this book, and thus, many of the current facilities and applications are obviously not described, this reference is still recommended for prospective teachers and administrators of self-access centers as it provides them with a general introduction to the practicalities of setting-up and managing these centers. Divided into two parts, the first section gives general advice on several practical issues involved in the setting up of self-access facilities, such as the layout, equipment, classification, access and retrieval, orientation, staffing, materials, and the development of support-systems for the learners. Of more interest to teachers is the second part, which provides a large number of examples of self-access materials and activities intended to improve receptive

and productive skills as well as vocabulary, grammar, and what Sheerin calls, key functional areas. Each of the suggested tasks, which take up the bulk of the book, are “intended primarily as ‘prototypes’”... or “recipes for the production of other similar activities at varying levels” (p.9). They consist of three parts: the pre-task, intended for the students, contains information on the level, age, language group, topic, aim and activity type as well as instructions and advice on preparation; the post-task, also directed at the students, includes the key, tapescript and follow-up; and the final part, addressed to the teacher, contains comments and other suggestions for use. Despite the focus on self-directed learning, in this book teachers will also find many suggestions for implementing in the classroom.

BOSCH, M. (1996). *Autonomia i aprenentatge de llengües*. Barcelona: Editorial Graó.

Based on years of experience in self-access and autonomous learning, in this volume Bosch shares her insights into the wide range of possibilities when setting up and running a self-access center. The volume starts with an introduction to the conception and development of autonomous learning and its role in current methodological practices. A general description about self-access centers is then provided which serves as the background for the following chapters: chapter 3 is devoted entirely to the types of materials that can be found in SACs, including language learning and learner training materials, a great deal of which are exemplified in the last chapter of the book. Chapter 4 is the widest in scope as it addresses several issues related to the organization of SACs, including types of centers, layout, personnel, equipment, evaluation, budget, as well as suggestions for designing and classifying materials and offering support to the learner.

### 3.2. *The British Council ELT series on self-access learning*

Echoing the growing interest in self-access learning, a series of five booklets on this area was published by the English Language Division of the British Council (Manchester). These guides, mostly addressed to language teachers and administrators involved in setting up and running resource and self-access centers, examine different issues concerning self-access learning, and provide, in a very straightforward manner, practical guidelines and suggestions for implementation as well as useful references and addresses.

MCCALL, J. (1992). *Self-access: setting up a centre*.

MOORE, C. (1992). *Self-access: appropriate technology*.

STURTRIDGE, G. (1992). *Self-access: preparation and training*.

CARVALHO, D. (1993). *Self-access: appropriate material*.

BOONTON, PH.; BENSON, P. (1996). *Self-access: classification and retrieval*.

McCall's introductory volume addresses the main concerns of people who set up self-access facilities for the first time, such as the design and lay-

out of the center, furniture and equipment, storage and display, staffing, access systems, presentation of materials, monitoring and evaluation. Moore's booklet provides practical advice on how to choose and exploit audio, video, computers and multimedia in self-access centers, including current applications such as email, CD-ROM, hypertext, video and laser interactive systems. Sturtridge's volume focuses on the roles and preparation of the staff and learners of self-access centers, and includes simulation exercises for learners and staff training. Carvalho's guide centers around the selection and adaptation of commercial material as well as the design of in-house materials for use in self-access centers. Finally, Boonton and Benson provide an introduction to the library skills required for self-access center management, including classification, cataloguing and indexing, as well as computer applications.

### 3.3. Collections of articles

ESCH, E. (ed.). (1994). *Self-access and the adult language learner*. London: CILT.

This book discusses a range of theoretical and practical issues related to the setting up of self-access centers. The papers, divided into six sections, address a variety of aspects of self-access language learning, such as learners' perceptions of language learning, the role of technology and the potential uses of electronic communication, learner support systems, interacting with learners, the provision of resources, staff and management training and other practical matters such as materials design, databases, files and cataloguing.

GARDNER, D.; MILLER, L. (eds.). (1994). *Directions in self-access language learning*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.

The volume presents a collection of 16 papers, most of which are written by members of HASALD (Hong Kong Association of Self-Access Learning and Development) demonstrating the wide ranging interests and expertise in the field of the contributors. The book, grouped around four broad themes: approaches to self-access, learner training, materials and evaluating self-access, covers very practical issues related to self-access language learning, such as the use of self-access logs, the implementation of self-access writing centers, the creation of interactive videos, and multimedia computer simulation, and the evaluation of self-access centers, to cite a few. The final chapter, written by the editors, should be of special interest to researchers as it points out at the specific needs and research areas that should be addressed in future research to advance in this area. Altogether, these papers demonstrate that self-access learning should not be perceived as a unique method but as a 'variety of methods [that] can be adopted in dealing with similar learners in similar situations'(p. ix).

GARDNER, D.; MILLER, L. (1999). *Establishing self-access: from theory to practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

This volume examines ways of establishing, maintaining and developing self-access language learning (SALL). While much of the book presents practical ideas dealing with issues related to SALL, they are supported by references to relevant literature and research. This link between theory and practice makes the debate about SALL accessible and makes this book a useful resource for establishing and running self-access learning facilities. The unique features of the book include a typology of self-access facilities; a discussion about how to manage self-access; a step by step guide on evaluating self-access; and a wide variety of practical suggestions for implementing self-access in different contexts.

#### 4. Internet resources

**AILA Scientific Commission on Learner Autonomy.** Its main objective is to encourage, support and co-ordinate developments within autonomous language learning. Apart from organizing symposiums on learner autonomy at AILA conferences, the SC

1. publishes an annual **Newsletter** circulated by email and published on the web at the following address: <<http://www.vuw.ac.nz/lals/LALLnews>>. For inquiries, contact Sara Cotterall at <[sara.cotterall@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:sara.cotterall@vuw.ac.nz)>
2. maintains a data base, the **Learner Autonomy Project Inventory (LAPI)**, which describes on-going research projects within the area. For an up-dated list contact <[Dam@DLH1.DLH.Dk](mailto:Dam@DLH1.DLH.Dk)> or visit the web site at <<http://ec.hku.hk/autonomy/lapi.html>>
3. provides an electronic discussion forum on language learning autonomy (**AUTO-L**). To subscribe to the list, contact Anita Wenden at <[wldyc@cun-ym.cuny.edu](mailto:wldyc@cun-ym.cuny.edu)>

**Autonomy and Independence in Language Learning** (<<http://ec.hku.hk/autonomy>>). This site includes information on recent and forthcoming events on autonomy in language learning. The author of this site, Phil Benson, has also compiled an extensive **bibliography** with updated references in the area, which can be visited at the web site: <<http://ec.hku.hk/autonomy/bibliog.html>>

**CARLA: Second Language Learning Strategies** (Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition) is a Web site on language learning strategy research maintained by the University of Minnesota. For more information visit the website at <<http://carla.acad.umn.edu/slstrategies.html>>

**HASALD (The Hong Kong Association for Self-access Learning and Development)**. This association organizes conferences, monthly meetings and publishes a newsletter called 'Self-access Language Learning'. (<<http://www.engl.poly.edu.hk/hasald/>>).



**IATEFL Learner Independence SIG** (Special Interest Group of the International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language). This association holds meetings, workshops and conferences, including a stand on learner independence at the annual IATEFL conference; publishes a newsletter called 'Independence' three times a year, which includes practical and theoretical articles, materials reviews, NET updates, details of events and advice on self-access. For more information visit the SIG Web site at <<http://www.iatefl.org/lisig/lihome.htm>>

**International E-Mail Tandem Network.** (<<http://www.Slf.ruhr-uni-bochum.de/>>). Web site maintained by the European Union funded project, which includes resources for autonomous language learning in tandem and an extensive bibliography.

**Learning Paths.** (<[http://utenti.tripod.it/learning\\_paths/](http://utenti.tripod.it/learning_paths/)>). This website is specially devoted to learning styles, learning strategies and learner autonomy, with a special emphasis on language learning, but with ample opportunities for cross-curricular work. Available in two versions (English and Italian), it provides papers, questionnaires, on-line demonstrations of strategy applications, materials for learners' and teachers' use, bibliographies and links to other specific sites.

**PLAN (Professional Language Advisers Network)** shares and exchanges information, research and good practice in issues related to the profession of language advisers. It includes a bibliography of materials on issues related to advising for language learning. For more information visit the web site at <<http://www.hull.ac.uk/langinst/plan/index.htm>>. They also maintain a discussion list at <[plan@mailbase.ac.uk](mailto:plan@mailbase.ac.uk)>

**SMILE (Strategies for Managing and Independent Learning Environment)** seeks to implement independent language learning strategies and foster independent learning inside and outside the classroom. You can visit their web site at <<http://www.hull.ac.uk/langinst/smile/index.htm>>. They include a discussion list at <[smile@mailbase.ac.uk](mailto:smile@mailbase.ac.uk)>.

Following is a selection of **self-access language learning centers** that maintain web sites which include information about their facilities and services:

City University of Hong Kong (Independent Learning Center)  
<<http://www.cityu.edu.hk/elc/sac.htm>>

Universitat de Barcelona. Escola d'Idiomes Moderns (Centre d'autoaprenentatge de llengües). (in Catalan)  
<<http://www.eim.ub.es>>

University of Cambridge (Independent Learning Center)  
<<http://www.langcen.cam.ac.uk/studyfac/privstud.htm>>

University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign (LinguaCenter)

<<http://deil.lang.uiuc.edu/LinguaCenter/>>

Universitat Jaume I (Centre d'Autoaprenentatge de Llengües) (in Catalan)

<<http://sic.uji.es/serveis/slt/cal/>>

Purdue On-Line Writing Lab

<<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/>>