



treffpunkt sprachen 
ZENTRUM FÜR SPRACHE,
PLURILINGUALISMUS UND FACHDIDAKTIK



LEARNER AUTONOMY -

CURRENT PRACTICE AND FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

2nd and 3rd June 2017



Conference rooms

Department of Theology

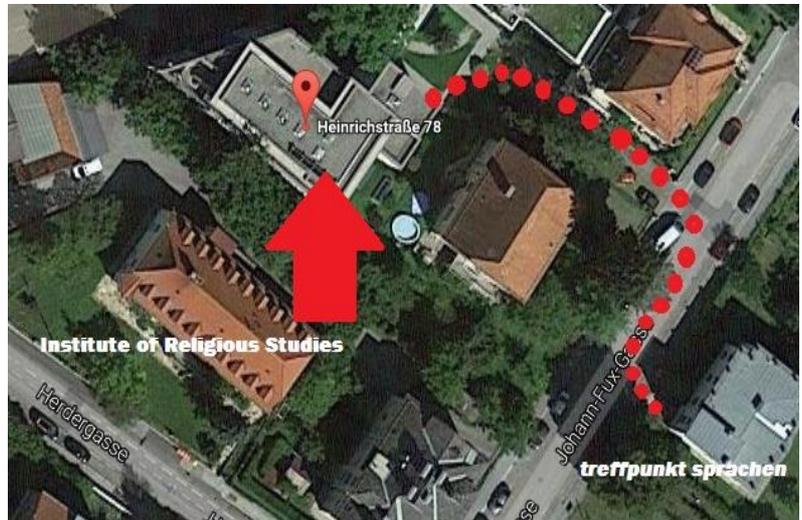
Heinrichstraße 78
8010 Graz

CONFERENCE ROOMS:

1. HS 47.01/02 (ground floor)
2. HS 47.21 (2nd floor)
3. HS 47.22 (2nd floor)

Coffee break

4. Foyer of HS 47.01/02



treffpunkt sprachen – Centre for Language, Plurilingualism and Didactics

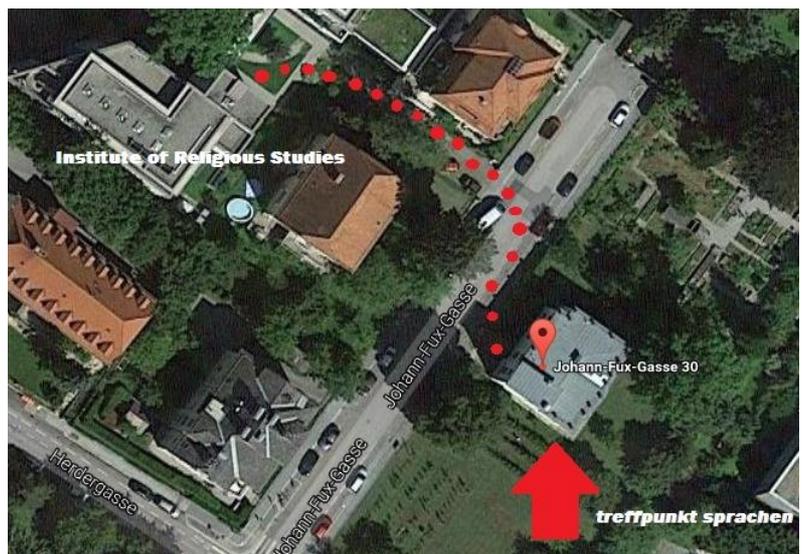
Johann-Fux-Gasse 30
8010 Graz

CONFERENCE ROOMS:

5. Library (ground floor)
6. 29.11 (1st floor)
7. 29.12 (1st floor)

Lunch break

8. 1st floor of *treffpunkt sprachen*



Friday, June 2nd 2017

01.00 pm – 02.00 pm *Registration open*
Foyer of HS 47.01/02

02.00 pm – 02.30 pm **Welcome and opening of conference**
HS 47.01/02

02.30 pm – 03.15 pm **1st plenary speaker**
HS 47.01/02

David Little, Trinity College Dublin, Ireland

Language learner autonomy: Where are we now?

When the concept of learner autonomy first became a topic of discussion in foreign language education, it was a minority interest. Now, almost forty years after the publication of Henri Holec's *Autonomy and foreign language learning*, it still stands apart from the mainstream, despite having become a major focus of academic publishing. Although it has shaped notably successful language teaching experiments in a number of countries, it has not had a large-scale impact on classroom practice and learning outcomes. There are, I think, two reasons for this. First, learner autonomy remains a fuzzy concept; there is a broad consensus that it entails giving learners responsibility for their own learning but no general agreement on the scope of the concept or its practical implications for teaching and learning. Secondly, however we decide to elaborate the concept, most teachers at all levels of education are unsettled by the idea of giving even a modicum of control to their learners. My talk will consider these and related issues with reference to my own theoretical explorations and the classroom practice for which I have been responsible or with which I am closely familiar.

03.15 pm – 03.45 pm *Coffee break*
Foyer of HS 47.01/02

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Friday, June 2nd 2017

03.45 pm – 5.00 pm **Parallel discussion groups according to different educational contexts**

Group 1
HS 47.01/02

Annamaria Pinter and Irena Šubic Jeločnik
Primary and lower secondary level

Group 2
SR 47.21

Leni Dam
Secondary level

Group 3
SR 47.22

Lis Pölzleitner and Frank Lacey
Secondary level

Group 4
SR 29.11

Sandro Amendolara and Stephen Scott Brewer
University level

Group 5
SR 29.12

Klaus Schwienhorst and Anja Burkert
University level

Group 6
Library
treffpunkt sprachen

Ilse Born-Lechleitner and Christian Ludwig
Adult education

05.15 pm – 06.00 pm
HS 47.01/02

Questions for David Little in connection with his plenary and issues arising from the group discussions
moderated by Sandro Amendolara

07.00 pm

Reception at the Town Hall by a representative of the Mayor of Graz

Saturday, June 3rd 2017

09.00 am – 09.45 am

HS 47.01/02

2nd plenary speaker

Leni Dam, formerly University College of Copenhagen, Denmark

Teachers as researchers of their own development towards language learner autonomy

It looks as if a big hurdle or constraint - if not the biggest - for developing learner autonomy is the teacher himself/herself. For the last 40 years I have tried to support teachers in developing learner autonomy. In workshops, in talks and in writing my aim has been to provide teachers with useful tools for getting their learners actively engaged in their own learning: ways of getting the learners to use the target language from the very beginning of learning English, activities designed to support a differentiated and inclusive pedagogy, documentation of own learning - just to mention a few. But the focus has always been the learner, and the results have not been satisfactory. In this talk I will therefore focus on the teacher. How can the teacher be supported in becoming a researcher of his or her own development? How can the teacher be supported in a continuous journey on the road towards learner autonomy? The talk will to a large extent be based on my own experience from in-service teacher training.

09.45 am – 10.15 am

HS 47.01/02

Time to prepare questions for Leni Dam in small groups

10.15 am – 10.45 am

HS 47.01/02

Questions for Leni Dam

moderated by Sandro Amendolara

10.45 am – 11.15 am

Foyer of HS 47.01/02

Coffee break

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Saturday, June 3rd 2017

11.15 am – 12.15 am **Parallel workshops on selected areas of language learner autonomy**

Workshop 1
HS 47.01

Annamaria Pinter, University of Warwick, UK

From passive objects of research to active co-researchers: Children developing autonomous skills

In this workshop I will be sharing my experiences of working with primary English teachers in India who tried to engage their learners as co-researchers in their classrooms. I will share some practical examples of tasks and activities that have worked well in these classrooms and the participants of the workshop will have the chance to ask questions as well as offer their views and experiences. We will also explore the links between these tasks and what autonomous learning might mean in children's English classes. If participants are interested, I can further share the children's and the teachers' reflections about their experiences of working together as co-researchers.

Workshop 2
HS 47.02

Frank Lacey, Aadalens Privatskol, Denmark

Language teaching without logbooks!!! Forget it!!!

Logbooks give teachers an insight into students' learning and teachers' practice. But they do so much more. If you want to learn to swim, then you have to get into the water and do it. If you want to learn a language, you have to get into your logbook and do it. Logbooks are the goldmines of language learning. Kids do it! Kids learn. Kids use language in an authentic communication and teachers experience learning and meet the individual student in and through the words of the learner. A language classroom without a logbook is nonsense! In this workshop we shall analyse 13-14 year olds' logbooks and discuss their use in the autonomous classroom.

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Workshop 3
SR 47.21

Christian Ludwig, PH Karlsruhe, Germany

‘Divide et impera’? – Differentiation and individualisation in the autonomous foreign language classroom

The idea of differentiated and individualised instruction is by far not new but has been gaining momentum in the field of foreign language learning over the last decade. Differentiation, designed to meet all students’ needs, however, often remains an incomprehensible and even mystical approach to many teachers and learners alike. In the course of this workshop, we will shed light on the idea that autonomous foreign language learning not simply complements differentiation but rather naturally accommodates differences between learners. In a first step, we will explore some of the main ideas of differentiation and individualisation. In the main part of the workshop, we will then discuss simple ways to differentiate and individualise by gradually developing your learners’ autonomy. Here, the argument will be made that the autonomous classroom is per se a differentiated and, to a certain extent, individualised classroom. Participants should feel encouraged to share their experiences with differentiated instruction and bring their own examples of individualised/differentiated activities.

Workshop 4
SR 47.22

Klaus Schwienhorst, Center for Languages for Special Purposes,
Leibnitz University, Hanover, Germany

Technology for autonomy: Useful computer-assisted language learning tools in the autonomous classroom and beyond

Almost since the early days of learner autonomy in the late seventies/early eighties, the concept had strong links to the field of computer-assisted language learning (CALL). With the spread of Internet technologies in the nineties, CALL became the prime tool or vehicle to realise several of learner autonomy’s central goals: helping learners to assume responsibility for their own learning; learners making decisions on learning environments, learning resources and learning schedules; learners reflecting on language and language learning; learners communicating in the target language at all times. The workshop will start with a short overview of 40 years of technology-supported language learning in learner autonomy and then continue to experiment hands-on in small groups with a selection of current CALL and mobile tools. Our goal is to evaluate the usefulness of a variety of CALL tools and then go on to establish a checklist of “must-have” features we expect in tools for the development of language learner autonomy. It is recommended that participants bring their own PCs and/ or Macs and/or Android devices.

Saturday, June 3rd 2017

Workshop 5
Library
treffpunkt sprachen

Stephen Scott Brewer, Université Paris-Est Créteil Val de Marne,
France

If you haven't memorised it, you ain't learned it: Enhancing students' memory & memory strategies

A teacher's main job is to design and orchestrate learning situations. Students need space in the classroom that allows them to explore, enact action possibilities, and develop competent language skills *from within*. Teachers transform their students' "enaction potential" by optimizing their memory for language. This session is part theory and part activity-based. This workshop is rooted in the premise that language learning can only take place provided learners can bring forth or *enact* "holds" in the L2 sound stream that they are exposed to and can use to co-construct meaning with others. This idea is not very different from the notion of "holds" that a rock-climber uses to scale a rock face. According to this enactive perspective, learning only occurs as a result of mutual interaction between the learner's sensorimotor and cognitive capabilities and the *perceived* environment. Such an inside-out view of language learning does not minimize the importance of the environment or situation that teachers design and bring to bear on their students' enactive capabilities. However, any potential "holds" inherent in the didactic environment can only emerge from the learner's personal engagement with them. In this respect, memory plays an essential role in expanding students' abilities to enact greater numbers of "holds" and thus function effectively in the various linguistic contexts they are immersed in. Memory strategies are also believed to significantly enhance enactive learning potential. Participants will take part in a number of activities that they can use with their students.

12.15 pm – 01.30 pm *Lunch break*
1st floor
treffpunkt sprachen

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Saturday, June 3rd 2017

01.30 pm – 02.15 pm 3rd plenary speaker

HS 47.01/02

Sarah Mercer, University of Graz, Austria

Autonomy-supportive relationships between teacher and pupils

Contemporary views of autonomy have moved away from more individualistic views and now stress its social nature. Learners are part of an intricate network of social relationships, which can both hinder and support their autonomy. One of the key relationships is the one between learner and teacher. In this talk, I would like to focus on the nature of teacher-learner rapport and the qualities of an autonomy-supportive relationship. Against the backdrop of specific contextual constraints in and beyond the classroom, we will discuss the balancing acts for teachers between controlling and autonomy-supportive behaviours. We will talk about the characteristics of quality relationships such as trust, empathy, respect, and responsiveness. To conclude, we will reflect on specific strategies that teachers can work with in order to promote such relationships that engender learner autonomy.

02.15 pm – 02.45 pm Time to prepare questions for Sarah Mercer in small groups

HS 47.01/02

02.45 pm – 03.15 pm Questions for Sarah Mercer

HS 47.01/02

moderated by Sandro Amendolara

03.15 pm – 03.45 pm Coffee break

Foyer of HS 47.01/02

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Saturday, June 3rd 2017

03.45 pm – 04.45 pm **Parallel workshops: Examples of teacher practice in the Austrian/Slovenian context**

Workshop 1a
HS 47.01

Lis Pölzleitner, University of Graz, Austria

How to engage students with writing: Autonomous writing tasks in secondary school

Even though Austrian students have to take standardized final exams, we need not bore them with all the writing prompts in our textbooks. The main goal of the new writing exam is to teach the learners to write appropriate texts for a specific audience. This is best practiced in authentic, real-life situations and with a REAL audience, who will actually read the learners' texts. In this workshop, we will be looking at ways to create authentic situations where learners of all ages write about topics of their interest and share their writing with an audience. We'll be looking at open formats that allow and encourage creativity and invite the learners to take responsibility and ownership of their texts. Examples of the following projects will be presented and discussed:

- free-homework
- magazine project
- blog-writing
- storybooks (spooky stories, personification stories)
- the blank sheet (booklets)
- genius hour projects

Workshop 2a
HS 47.02

Christine Mayr-Bauernhofer and Susanne Gmeiner, KLEX, Graz, Austria

Learner autonomy in practice at KLEX/Graz

Open classroom doors, students working in cubicles, lounging on sofas, pillows or staircases – studying the matter at hand in deep concentration. The teachers are wandering about, giving encouragement or help where needed and occasionally, of course, a little reminder to get back to work or respect the silence. This is learner autonomy at Klex – live. We will offer a little insight into daily school life at NMS/BG/BRG Klex/Graz, where open learning and learner autonomy play a key role. How do a different schedule, learning spaces, logbooks, study times and the role of the teacher contribute to an atmosphere promoting autonomous learning processes.

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Workshop 3a
SR 47.21

Tanja Psonder and Dietmar Tatzl, Fachhochschule Joanneum,
Graz, Austria

Role modeling pathways to learner autonomy in tertiary English language education

This contribution treats the function of teachers as role models in developing learner autonomy in tertiary settings. It draws upon my experiences with teaching at a university of applied sciences and suggests ways to autonomy that instructors may shape by their teaching behaviour. I argue that teachers need to live autonomy in order to truly encourage students to find their own pathways to learner autonomy. In other words, teachers must practise what they preach, or they will lose credibility and act as poor role models. I discuss examples of role modelling autonomous behaviour which may trigger a comparison with other teachers' role modelling experiences in their local settings. This contribution should thus initiate a process of self-reflection in teachers and inspire them to role model behaviour that is likely to foster autonomy in their local environment.

The inverted classroom model in ESP courses: A reflection

In the traditional classroom, the teachers are expected to provide their students with learning materials and most of the classroom time is devoted to reading and/or listening to texts followed by vocabulary work and text analysis. Hence, the time for the students to interact with one another in hands-on activities is often limited and this shift to the processing part of the learning in a collaborative setting has not been fully achieved. ESP instructors, in general, strongly depend on student collaboration as they need to call forth content knowledge of them. Based on this, they then build their tasks on the recalling of these facts and concepts or methods to create speech prompts which enable the students to process their knowledge in discussions, debates, role-plays, presentations and problem solving activities. In this workshop, I will discuss the steps that accompany the repurposing of class time and the implications I experienced on teaching and learning.

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Saturday, June 3rd 2017

Workshop 4a
SR 47.22

Marjorie Rosenberg, Freelance, Austria

Creating activities for different learner types

Creating tasks which benefit our learners can be an enriching activity for teachers and their learners. In this workshop, participants will discover how to create tasks taking into account the diversity of learner types we have in our classrooms. The workshop is based on the concept that reaching learners means mixing methods, materials and approaches. Taking this one step further, these ideas can be incorporated into the conception and creation of activities and tasks for grammar, vocabulary and general language practice. Participants will have the chance to try out tasks focussing on different skill sets, abilities and the language we use to instruct learners. It will demonstrate how tasks can be extended to include other learner types and help learners acquire new strategies for learning.

Workshop 5a
Library

Irena Šubic Jeločnik, Biotechnical Centre Naklo, Slovenia

Giving up autonomy

How to avoid burning out as implementing learner autonomy takes its toll

In this workshop we are going to examine some difficulties encountered by teachers trying to implement autonomy in their classes and share possible solutions as well as the bits of wisdom acquired along the way. We are going to look into some strategies that can help avoid burning out or at least reduce its impact.

04.45 pm – 05.00 pm **Closing of conference by Anja Burkert**
HS 47.01/02

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