ReNLA *Bulletin,* July2011

Dear ReNLA Members,

Here is the latest AILA Research Network on Learner Autonomy *Bulletin*, in pdf form. Later this will be made available on the ReNLA website.

In this *Bulletin* we provide important information relating to the organization of the Research Network, so please take a close look at the related items (Convenors' report on 2008-11, Information and a call for action regarding the lifetime of Research Networks (including ours), Beijing Business Meeting agenda, and Call for Nominations for elections to ReNLA convenorship positions, 2011-14).

We also provide information about the ReNLA symposium and other autonomy-related events at the August AILA Congress in Beijing, and an invitation to you to join other members for dinner if you are attending the Congress.

However, first and foremost in this *Bulletin* we wish to honour the memory of Mia Victori, a long-standing member of the ReN (and, previously, Scientific Commission) on Learner Autonomy and a leading promoter of learner autonomy in Spain and beyond.

Here are the full contents of the *Bulletin*:

1. Tribute to Mia Victori
2. Recent publications by members
3. Important organizational matters
    a. ReNLA Convenors' Report (2008-2011)
    b. Information / Call for action regarding ReNLA renewal
    c. Beijing business meeting agenda
    d. Call for nominations for the position of convenor (2011-14)
4. AILA World Congress Beijing, August 2011
    a. ReNLA Symposium
    b. Other autonomy-related presentations by members
    c. ReNLA Dinner

Best wishes,

Garold Murray and Richard Smith
(Convenors of the AILA Research Network on Learner Autonomy in Language Learning)

1. Tribute to Mia

Mia Victori passed away on the 29th of November 2010 after having suffered from a sudden aneurism. She died at the age of 44 in Newport Beach while on a sabbatical at California State University. She was married and had three children (13, 9 and 4). Mia had a Masters degree in Applied Linguistics from UCLA (1989-90) and a PhD from the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB) (1995). Victori was an associate professor in Applied Linguistics at the UAB and a member of GRAL research group (Universitat de Barcelona).

Early in her career, Victori did pioneer work in the area of metacognitive knowledge in TESOL. Her work on learner autonomy and learning strategies is well known and often cited. She had recently started a large Ministry-funded research project on CLIL. Her latest publications include "Perceived vs. actual strategy use across three oral communication tasks" coauthored with S. Khan (*IRAL*, 49,1) and the chapter "CLIL in Catalonia: an overview of research" coauthored with T. Navés in *CLIL in Spain: Implementation, Results and Teacher Training* (Eds. Y. Ruiz de Zarobe & D. Lasagabaster).

Mia Victori had a strong vocation for teaching and research and loved the field of Applied Linguistics. She had always been a strong believer in learner autonomy and had started and directed one of the first university self-access centers in Spain. She was a frequent participant in AILA conferences. She was a member of the Learner Autonomy Research Network from its foundation and ran for Convenor in the last elections. She always looked forward to the AILA conferences and had several friends among the ReNLA members. Those of us who had the privilege of meeting or working with her know she was a good listener as well as efficient and modest. She is a great loss in our academic community, where she will certainly be missed.

Elsa Tragant

2. New publications

Since the last issue of the *Bulletin* we have added the following to our list of recent publications by members. You can access the complete list of publications here: http://ailarenla.org/publications

Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching (Volume 5, Issue 2, 2011) – a special issue, edited by Turid Trebbi, which brings together papers from the 10th Nordic Conference on Language Learner Autonomy in the Foreign Language Classroom (2009, Bergen, Norway), The special issue includes papers by: Turid Trebbi; Henri Holec; Kuchah Kuchah & Richard Smith; Anja Burkert; Manuel Jiménez Raya; Pia Acker & Nicole Poteaux; Leni Dam & Lienhard Legenhausen; Peggy Candas; Tim Lewis & Elodie Vialleton; and Ema Ushioda.

We would like to add your publications to the list. In order to have your latest publications (2009-2011) listed on the site, please send references in APA style to Garold Murray (garold.murray@gmail.com).

3. Important organizational matters

a. ReNLA Convenors' Report (2008-2011)
b. Information / Call for action regarding ReNLA renewal
c. Beijing business meeting agenda
d. Call for nominations for ReNLA convenorship positions (2011-14)

a. ReNLA Convenors' Report (2008-2011)

This has been uploaded to: http://renautonomy.files.wordpress.com/2009/11/2008-11-renla-report.pdf
Please send any questions or comments on any aspects of ReNLA activities to Garold Murray and Richard
Smith, or share your views on the website's 'Activities' page: http://ailarenla.org/activities/

b. Information / Call for action regarding ReNLA renewal

Over the past year we have been trying to clarify – and safeguard – the future status of the Research
Network, given that the relevant AILA bylaw (§7, no. 2: http://www.aila.info/about/statutes-and-
bylaws/bylaws.html#art7) currently reads as follows:

> ReNs exist for three years and can be renewed. At any point in time, there will be no more
> than 15 ReNs in existence. The life of a ReN is not expected to be longer than six years.

We are currently coming up to our 6th birthday as a Research Network, although we existed for many years
previously as an AILA Scientific Commission. With the support of some other Research Networks in a
similar position, and of some members of the AILA Executive Board, we have succeeded in ensuring that
the matter of Research Network longevity will be on the agenda at the Executive Board and International
Committee meetings in Beijing. We will be proposing a simple change – that the above sentence 'The life of
a ReN is not expected to be longer than six years' be dropped from the Bylaws.

Over the next few weeks we'll be contacting all individual members of the Executive Board and
International Committee to put our case to them in writing. We will at that point be asking for your help in
writing to AILA EB and IC representatives in support of our case. Please do not write to them now, but do
contact Richard Smith (R.C.Smith@warwick.ac.uk) if you know personally any of the EB or IC members
listed here: EB: http://www.aila.info/about/organization/executive-board.html; IC:
http://www.aila.info/about/organization/international-committee.html

c. Beijing ReNLA Business Meeting agenda

The ReNLA Business Meeting – open to all members of the Research Network – will be held following the
ReNLA symposium at the Bejing AILA Congress on Friday, August 26, from 11:30-12:00. Whether or not
you can attend the meeting in person, if you have items that you would like to see on the agenda, please

contact Richard (R.C.Smith@warwick.ac.uk) **before August 15th**. Likewise, if you would like to comment on anything on the agenda but cannot be present in Beijing, please contact him. If you are planning to attend, please <u>be sure to read the following before the meeting as we will not be providing printed copies:</u>

- the minutes of the last ReNLA Business Meeting (http://renautonomy.files.wordpress.com/2009/11/minutesren2008meeting.pdf)
- the Report on ReNLA Activities 2008-2011 (http://renautonomy.files.wordpress.com/2009/11/2008-11-renla-report.pdf)

What follows is a preliminary agenda for the half-hour meeting:

<u>Agenda: ReN on Learner Autonomy Business Meeting</u>
<u>Friday August 26, 11.30am, Para Room 7 (following the ReNLA Symposium)</u>

1. Members present
2. Apologies
3. Minutes of 2008 meeting (any issues arising)
4. ReNLA Convenors' Report, 2008-11 (questions / comments on report)
5. Lifetime of Research Networks (news from EB / IC meetings in Beijing)
6. Open discussion of any matters pertaining to ReNLA activities

d. Call for nominations for the position of convener, AILA Research Network (ReN) on Learner Autonomy (2011-14)

Dear Colleagues

We are calling for nominations for the position of convener of the Learner Autonomy ReN to be made by Sunday 2nd October 2011 (see 'Election procedure' below).

Garold Murray is standing down as he has served for two terms and Richard Smith is available to stand for a second term. We owe Garold enormous thanks for all his work in helping to take the ReN from strength to strength over the course of the 2005-08 and 2008-11 terms.

Eligibility to nominate
All AILA Learner Autonomy in Language Learning ReN members are invited to submit a nomination, provided that they have been a member for at least one month.

Criteria for nominees
Nominees should be members of the ReN on Learner Autonomy.
Nominees should be able to demonstrate a commitment to the field of Learner Autonomy through their research, teaching, conference presentations and/or publications.
Given the need to provide evidence to AILA of our ongoing viability as a research network, it is crucial that nominees be able to dedicate time and energy to building the network, strengthening links between members

and leading the ReN's activities.

It is desirable that the two conveners represent different geographical areas in an effort to reflect ReN membership and to expand activities into different parts of the world.

Roles of conveners

In the past, the responsibilities of the conveners have included the following:

1. Liaising with AILA - providing annual reports of activities.
2. Organising the Network's symposium at AILA (every three years).
3. Producing a regular Bulletin. Back issues of the Bulletin can be seen on the ReN's website at: http://www.ailarenla.org/bulletins
4. Promoting the ReN and recruiting members.

Currently, selected tasks (e.g. the design and maintenance of the website http://www.ailarenla.org/, moderation of AUTO-L discussions, maintenance and expansion of the membership database) have been delegated to other ReN members.

Term of conveners

Conveners can serve for a maximum of two 3-year terms. Conveners who have served for one term may stand for election to serve for a second term.

Election procedure

1. If you are interested in nominating someone for the position of ReN convener, first contact them to make sure they are willing to stand. If they agree, then email your nomination to me by Sunday 2nd October 2011.
2. Nominees should submit their self-introductions to me by Sunday 9th October. These should include a brief biodata (so that we know who you are and where you work, and what you have done in the Learner Autonomy field) and say how you see the ReN developing, how you plan to contribute to the ReN etc (i.e. "Why should you vote for me?"). Max. 250 words.
3. Nominees' information to be posted to the ReN website by Friday 14th October. [If there are only two nominations at this point, the nominees will be elected unopposed. In the case of three or more nominees, we proceed to Step 4.]
4. Call for voting to be sent to all ReN members by Friday 14th October.
5. Votes to be sent to me by Friday 28th October.
6. Members to be informed of the results of the voting by Saturday 29th October.

I look forward to your nominations coming in.

Best wishes,

Terry Lamb
T.Lamb@sheffield.ac.uk
(Learner Autonomy in Language Learning ReN Co-convener 2002-08)

4. AILA World Congress Beijing, August 2011

a. ReNLA Symposium

The *AILA Research Network on Learner Autonomy* Symposium will be held at the 16th World Congress of the International Association of Applied Linguistics in Beijing on **Friday, August 26, from 9:00 – 11:30 in Para Room 7**. The theme of the symposium is 'Social Dimensions of Autonomy' The names of the presenters and the titles of their papers, accompanied by full abstracts, can be seen here: http://ailarenla.org/events/beijing2011

b. Other autonomy-related presentations by members

Wednesday, August 24th
11:00-11:30, Para Room 17
Social language learning spaces: Affordances in a community of learners
Naomi Fujishima and Garold Murray
This paper reports on an ethnographic inquiry into the language learning affordances available to English and Japanese foreign language learners through their interactions in a social learning space at a Japanese university. The authors examine these opportunities and identify the conditions which supported the emergence of a community of learners.

Wednesday, August 24th
11:40-12:40, Para Room 39
Local PLAY Global STOP Autonomy REWIND Questions WRITE
Mike Nix, Kay Irie, Andy Barfield and Alison Stewart
In researching and writing on learner autonomy in Japan for an imagined global readership, we are concerned with how representations of local multivocal, collaborative autonomy practices can become delocalized. In this workshop we explore how multivocality and diverse perspectives can be protected and promoted in writing for and about autonomy.

Wednesday, August 24th
14:00-14:30, Para Room 31
Issues of autonomy in the transition from learner to teacher
HUANG, Jing (Peter)
This interpretative qualitative study examined issues of autonomy in the transition from foreign language learning to foreign language teaching. Major participants were English majors in a four-year BA TEFL degree programme in a mainland Chinese teacher-education university. Data sources included learners' autobiographical accounts and interviews focusing on learner experiences. [There will be some comparison with a similar study conducted in a Hong Kong university.]

Thursday, August 25th

8:30-10:30, Para Room 5

Symposium on *Learner autonomy in the classroom: Insights from practitioner research*

Moderated by Christine O'Leary

This Symposium will focus on practitioner research relating to the promotion of autonomy, within the language classroom, in various formal educational and cultural contexts, from a learner and teacher perspective. It will consider various aspects and issues which impact on the promotion of autonomy in day-to-day practice, including learner identity, the role of new digital technologies, and the role of the teacher.

Saturday, 27 August

14:00-14:30, Para Room 31

The recognition, acknowledgement and inclusion of life-wide learning, i.e. learning outside the classroom, in a language learning programme.

Felicity Kjisik

The concept of life-wide learning embraces experiential learning outside the classroom. This paper uses data based on students' autobiographical texts written as part of their studies in an autonomous learning module (ALMS) and explores ways of recognizing and including it in language learning contexts.

Saturday, August 27th

17.50-18:20, Para Room 31

Investigating written advice in self-directed modules: The effect on learning

Jo Mynard

This paper reports on a study which investigates the type of written feedback and advice given to learners taking a self-study module and how it effects the learning experience. The aim of the research is to understand more about the complex processes involved in completing a course of independent study.

Sunday, August 28th

09:00-11:00 (paper 10:30-11:00), Para Room 6

Intercultural competence and study abroad: A long-term study of European students in French West Africa

[within symposium *Towards interculturality through study and residence abroad*]

Jim Coleman

Questionnaires and interviews with 45 Europeans who undertook study and work placements in Senegal between 1985 and 2010 provide insights into the challenges (cultural, racial, sexual, affective) of a radically new context, and the intercultural learning which has shaped their subsequent beliefs, attitudes, careers, relationships and movements.

Please check your conference programme after you register for possible time and room changes!

c. ReNLA Dinner, Wednesday, August 24th

If you are interested in attending the ReNLA dinner, please inform Richard (R.C.Smith@warwick.ac.uk) **before 15th August.** Those attending the dinner are requested to meet at the main entrance to the Friendship Hotel at 7:30 p.m. on the evening of Wednesday, August 24th. We will go from there to the restaurant as a group.