

# Taking hold of learning

**Terry Lamb**

**University of Sheffield**



# *Letting go – taking hold*

Brian Page, 1992

1. Why is autonomy still relevant?
2. What does it mean?
3. Has it been forgotten by curriculum policy?

# Contextualising lifelong language learning: changes at a global level

- **International trade and economic growth**
- **Easier communication, including technological developments**
- **Cheaper transport**
- **International political developments**
- **Increasing availability of information**
- **Migratory movements**
- **Broader access to education**
- **Social justice concerns**

**→ need for increase in language learning**

- global languages (not only English)**
- neighbour's languages**
- increased range of 'community languages'**

**...and need for this to be lifelong language learning**

# Implications of globalisation for the individual

- **Need for flexibility in career trajectories (development of new skills, mobility, adaptability to new circumstances, learning new languages)**
- **Need to deal with large amounts of information**
- **Increasingly diverse individual learning needs**
- **Increasing need to live and work in constantly changing networks/communities**

# Diploma in Languages and International Communication

**Given that language learning and cultural awareness are absolutely vital for success in our increasingly globalised lives, an overarching aim of the Diploma in Languages and International Communication is to encourage young people to develop and maintain an interest in language learning and to understand cultural and intercultural issues.**



# **Diploma in Languages and International Communication: perspectives on language learning**

## **Employers**

- **broader spread of languages, to equip them to take advantage of jobs linked to emerging markets**
- **contextualisation of courses and qualifications to business contexts**
- **generic skills and abilities including adaptability, problem solving, working in teams and the ability to cope with the increasingly technology intensive, process-oriented and inter-disciplinary nature of work**

# **Diploma in Languages and International Communication: perspectives on language learning**

## **Higher Education**

- **Need to develop competent self-managers, to take initiatives in their language learning and to build independent research skills**



# **Diploma in Languages and International Communication: perspectives on language learning**

## **Providers**

- **Independent learners need to be taught not only to know how to speak in another language but also how to fully understand the responses**

**What kind of a learner  
does this imply?**



**The reflective and effective individual learner is someone who is personally aware...and is aware of how best they learn...and who shows resilience, perseverance and determination. Such learners have the skills and attributes necessary to:**

- **Organise and regulate their own learning;**
- **Set and meet challenging, but realistic objectives;**
- **Manage time effectively;**
- **Undertake research;**
- **Identify and solve problems;**
- **Identify, analyse and evaluate relevant information [...];**
- **Think and use their skills creatively.**

# Defining learner autonomy

**The ability to take charge of  
one's own learning**

**Holec, 1981**

**The capacity to take control of  
one's own learning**

**Benson, 2001**

# What is learner autonomy?

- **Self-management**



# Self-management...

Here the aim is for learners to manage their own learning by **planning** what they wish to or need to achieve (both short- and long-term goals), making choices from a range of learning activities and resources about how they are going to achieve this, and **monitoring** and **evaluating** their progress.



# What is learner autonomy?

- **Self-management**
- **Self-regulation**

# Self-regulation...

**awareness of the self as learner...** the aim is to enhance the processes and outcomes of learning ...through **awareness of their learning strategies** (Wenden, 1991).

# Assessment for Learning

- Black and Wiliam's (1998) *Inside the Black Box: Raising standards through classroom assessment*
- “AFL is the process of seeking and interpreting evidence for use **by learners** and their teachers to decide **where the learners are in their learning, where they need to go and how best to get there.**”  
(Assessment Reform Group 2002)

# Support materials for secondary teachers (DfES 2004)

**Sharing learning objectives with pupils**

**Helping pupils to know and recognize the standards they are aiming for**

**Involving pupils in peer and self-assessment**

**Providing feedback that leads pupils to recognising their next steps and how to take them**

**Promoting confidence that every pupil can improve**

**Involving both teacher and pupil in reviewing and reflecting on assessment information**

# Other policy references

- **Dearing Review (2007):** need to understand both what and how they are learning if they are to have long-term success
- **Key Stage 2 Framework (2005):** language learning strategies
- **‘New’ National Curriculum (2008):** Developing language learning strategies and skills; Personal, learning and thinking skills
- **Diploma in LIC (2011):** through an understanding of the structure of language and the language learning process develop learners language learning confidence, autonomy and independence



# DLIC: Self-directed language learning

- **knowledge, skills, confidence and attitudes**
- **autonomous learning of a language ab initio**
- **focus of assessment on the language learning process**
- **learners will be guided through this process**
- **reflect on what makes an effective language learner**
- **proactive in negotiating opportunities to acquire and use a new language**
- **demonstrate in an appropriate way whatever language has been learnt, for example through peer teaching or through accreditation via the Languages Ladder**
- **Apply their enhanced understanding of the learning process to the learning of their main language(s)**



# DLIC: Criteria

## (Knowledge and understanding)

- 1. their own approaches to language learning, including their learning preferences, styles and strategies, and motivations, and ways of developing these to increase their effectiveness**
- 2. a wide range of opportunities available in the local community and beyond that can be used for language learning, including ways in which technology can be exploited**
- 3. a wide range of activity and task types that can be used to support different aspects of language learning and ways of evaluating these**
- 4. a wide range of strategies that can be adopted in order to promote more effective language learning and use**
- 5. how to manage their own learning, including effective planning, monitoring and evaluation of learning, as well as the processes of reflection and how they support progression in learning**

# *Letting go – taking hold*

(Brian Page, 1992)

