

Wednesday 3 June

4:20pm - 5:00pm

Room: Block Y, Room Y302

Presentation Title: Autonomy and autonomies in TESOL Teacher Education: Fantasy and reality

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Theme:	Autonomy and teacher education
Presentation Type:	Paper presentation

Abstract

Learner Autonomy has long been a topic of exploration and debate in the field of TESOL, and policy-makers and teachers have become more overtly concerned with helping learners become more efficient and independent in their learning. In more recent years, the debate has become focused on the theoretical and philosophical aspects of autonomy, exploring its idealistic nature and questioning its very existence. Indeed, the concept of 'autonomy' is complex and controversial, leaving teachers who may be convinced of its importance, confused and anxious about what their role might be in developing greater autonomy in their learners.

In my view, it is now time to come back down to earth, confront the realities of the classroom, and reconsider the practicalities of teaching and learning for greater autonomy? How can teachers, in their daily work, support the development of greater autonomy in their learners? Is 'learner autonomy' the only autonomy we need to be concerned with in language teaching? How does 'teacher autonomy' interface with learner autonomy, and in what ways can teachers and teacher educators exert their own autonomy without it inhibiting that of their learners? How can a suitable balance be achieved, particularly within the constraints of many formal learning contexts? Referring to recent research, this paper will explore the notions of 'autonomies', their relationships and suggest practical ways forward.

Biodata

Barbara Sinclair is Associate Professor of Education (TESOL) at the University of Nottingham, UK.