

Invited Speaker

Thursday 4 June

4:20pm – 5:00pm

Room: Block Y, Room Y301



Cynthia White
Massey University
New Zealand

Cynthia White is Professor of Applied Linguistics, Massey University, New Zealand. She has published widely on distance and online learning, learner autonomy, learning strategies, and language and settlement issues among migrants and refugees. In 2004 she received the International TESOL Virginia French Allen Award for Scholarship and Service to the TESOL profession. In 2003, her book *Language Learning in Distance Education* was published by Cambridge University, and a co-edited book entitled *Languages and Distance Education: Evolution and Change* appeared with *Multilingual Matters* in 2005; in 2006 she edited a special issue of *Language Teaching Research* on online language teaching. Her most recent projects include the study of the regulation of affect in independent language learning, and of teacher identity in distance language teaching.

Topic: Inside independent learning: Old and new perspectives

Abstract

Concern for the individual learner and for learner choice, control and responsibility is central to the theory and practice of independent learning. Over the past three decades, enquiry into independent learning has focused on particular contexts or settings for learning, particular philosophies or approaches, and particular attributes of learners – whether these be dispositions, skills or goals. This paper provides a brief critical overview of landmark studies in independent learning, identifying both the sources and implications of developments in the field. New perspectives on independent learning, it is argued, have arisen from the emergence of a ‘new educational order’ (Field, 2006), lifelong and life-wide learning, and the growing importance of virtual learning opportunities. The paper then proposes a new paradigm of independent learning based on these emerging perspectives, together with questions and methodologies to guide further enquiry into the theory, research and practice of independent learning.

Field, J. (2006) *Lifelong learning and the new educational order*. Stoke on Trent: Trentham Books.