

Wednesday 3 June

3:20pm - 4:00pm

Room: Block Y, Room Y304

Presentation Title: A Social- Ecological Exploration of Learner Beliefs:
Toward Learner Autonomy

Presenter / Co-presenters:	Jane Louise Kehrwald, Massey University, New Zealand
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Theme:	Learner and teacher experiences
Presentation Type:	Paper presentation

Abstract

This paper reports on a longitudinal, collective case study aimed at investigating the emergent beliefs of English as a Second Language learners as they enter and participate in a tertiary level language learning context in New Zealand. It explores how learners negotiate entry into, and participate in, a program which has amongst its stated goals the development of independent, self-directed and reflective learning. An individual's cognitive operations, of which beliefs are a part, are constructed through interaction and participation in physical and social environments, and consequently beliefs bear the mark of those contexts. Thus, there is an ecology between the individual and the physical and social environments in which he/she participates and interacts. To that end, the participants were asked to represent their beliefs and experiences through a series of visual representations, such as posters and collages, and then to provide their own interpretations of what they had depicted. The resulting visual narratives offer interesting insights into the ways in which learners interpret and represent their experiences in their new language learning community, and how these experiences impact upon their sense of self, that is, their identity.

Biodata

Jane is a lecturer in ESOL and Language Teaching and is currently based in New Zealand. In the past Jane has lectured in Applied Linguistics in Australia and worked as a ESL teacher and teacher trainer in Thailand and Japan. Her research interests are in the areas of learner beliefs and learner autonomy and is currently working on her PhD at Massey University, New Zealand, which focuses on learners' visual representations of their beliefs.